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BERRIEN COUNTY

Photos by Don Campbell / HP staff

Berrien County Health Department Health Officer Nicki Britten, left, and Berrien County Undersheriff Chuck Heit address the media concerning the declaration of a state of local emergency in Berrien County during a news conference Thursday at the Berrien County Conference Room.

'Community spread' now likely

Local state of emergency declared; 3 patients have now recovered

By ALEXANDRA NEWMAN
HP Staff Writer

BENTON TOWNSHIP — Three of the 11 patients testing positive for COVID-19 in Berrien County have made a full recovery, health officials reported Thursday, as they also warned that "community spread" of the virus is now likely.

Nicki Britten, health officer for the Berrien County Health Department (BCHD), gave the update at a news conference Thursday afternoon.

"We believe we are now experiencing community spread of COVID-19," she said. "Residents should assume there's a risk of contracting COVID-19 wherever they may be in public: the grocery store, gas station or even at the workplaces of our essential services."

Britten said she knows there have been questions about where the people who have tested positive live and what public spaces they may have been in while they were infectious, but the health department will not release that information.

"This information is not helpful for the general public in preventing spread of the virus," she said. "We must start to shift our thinking to assume that people in our community have it and it could be spreading unknowingly."

A news conference with Berrien County Undersheriff Chuck Heit and Berrien County Health Department Health Officer Nicki Britten is held on Facebook Live Thursday regarding the declaration of a state of local emergency in Berrien County.

Britten said the county is still in the early days of the response and has a long road ahead of it.

"While it's easy to focus on

See EMERGENCY, page A10

Woman charged with arson, attempted murder

Police say she set fire to mobile home with her brother's children inside

By JULIE SWIDWA
HP Staff Writer

ST. JOSEPH — Several people, including four children, are lucky to be alive after a relative allegedly set fire to their mobile home while they were inside.

Jessica Mercado Rodriguez, 27, of Dayton, Ohio, was arraigned Thursday in Berrien County Trial Court on four counts of attempted murder and one count of second-degree arson. A preliminary hearing was set for April 9.

The woman, who was arraigned by video from the Berrien County jail, faces up to life in prison if convicted as charged.

Her lawyer asked for her to be released from jail without bond, and Berrien Chief Assistant Prosecutor Steve Pierangeli asked for a $250,000 bond. Judge Angela Pasula set bond at $1 million cash or surety.

The Lincoln Township Police Department and Lincoln Township Fire Department were called at 10:30 p.m. Wednesday to the Spring Lake Mobile Home Park at 604 W. John Beers Road, Stevensville.

Upon the officers' arrival, the fire had been extinguished and officers began an investigation.

A short time later, an allegedly intoxicated woman, who had fled the scene before officers arrived, was identified and arrested in the mobile home park, according to police.

Pierangeli said witnesses told police the woman allegedly set the home on fire in response to an earlier family dispute.

According to charging documents, she allegedly started the fire because she thought the wife of her brother, Juan Mercado Sr., was having an affair with her husband.

See ARSON, page A10

Lincoln Twp. to seek new police, fire millages

8-year millages heading to August ballot

By TONY WITTKOWSKI
HP Staff Writer

STEVENSVILLE — Lincoln Township is hoping taxpayers will approve two new millages and a millage renewal come August.

During the township's March board meeting last week, trustees approved two resolutions to add the language to the Aug. 4 primary ballot. The millages would help fund the police and fire departments.

Among the levies would be a new 1.5-mill police operating millage, a new 0.5-mill fire operating millage and the renewal of a 0.175-mill fire asset levy.

All three millages would be for eight years, beginning in 2020 and ending in 2027.

The township has a 0.5-mill police operating millage that is set to expire this year. Instead of pushing for a renewal of the 0.5 mills and asking for a new 1-mill police millage, trustees are combining the millages in a new 1.5-mill levy.

"The reason we did that was a 0.5 mill would only keep the status quo," said Clerk Stacy Loar-Porter. "After looking at the call activity and our population, we determined we are low on the police-to-citizen ratio. We felt it was our responsibility to get to a safer level and make sure residents have the coverage they deserve."

The township also has an existing 1.5 police millage that expires in 2023.

The cost of the new police millage for an average Lincoln Township home – $199,522 assessed

See MILLAGES, page A10

Q&A: How can the huge $2 trillion congressional aid package help you?

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER, ALEXANDRA OLSON, and SARAH SELL
Associated Press Writers

WASHINGTON — Congress is poised to approve an unprecedented $2.2 trillion economic rescue package that will provide one-time checks for most Americans and significant enhancements to unemployment benefits. Both will provide much-needed help to those recently laid-off and to financially stressed households as the coronavirus shuts down much of the economy.

Here are some questions and answers about how the legislation can help you:

Who is getting a check?

Everyone earning up to $75,000 in adjusted gross income – the income on your tax return – and who has a Social Security number will receive a $1,200 payment. The payment steadily declines for those who make more, and phases out for those who earn more than $99,000. For married couples, both adults receive $1,200, with the phase-out starting at $150,000 of income and falling to zero for couples who earn $198,000. Each child will also get $500. For heads of household with one child, the benefit starts to decline at $112,500 and falls to zero at $146,500.

What do I have to do to get one?

For most people, nothing. The U.S. Treasury will direct deposit the money in your bank if they have that information from this year's tax return or last year's. For everyone else, they will mail a check. If you didn't file a tax return for either 2018 or 2019, your check could be delayed. The government can use your Social Security benefit statement as well.

When will I get the payment?

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin has said repeatedly that it should arrive in three weeks. Even if it arrives electronically, you should receive a written notice within 15 days after the payment that specifies how much you received and how it was delivered.

Is there help in the bill for the unemployed?

The bill adds $600 a week, for a period of four months, to standard unemployment benefits, which vary by state. The measure adds 13 weeks of coverage for people who have exhausted their existing jobless benefits. It also provides funding for states to let people

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The Newspaper for Southwest Michigan

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Tomorrow's Weather
High 55 Low 46

6 50645 49085 0

State looking for field hospital sites to treat coronavirus patients

By KATHLEEN GRAY
Detroit Free Press

The state of Michigan is working with cities and the Army Corp of Engineers to determine where field hospitals to help treat a surge of coronavirus patients can be placed.

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said Thursday that the Army Corp of Engineers told her it would take three to four weeks to set up field hospitals, but she hopes that can happen more quickly.

"The most important thing is that we've got enough bed capacity. To prepare for the surge, we're looking for additional space that's adjacent to or close to hospitals," she said. "We're putting as much pressure as we can working with Army Corp of Engineers to do this as quickly as possible.

"And we've been working with Mayor Duggan about options that make sense."

Other states also are dealing with hospital bed shortages. In New York, the National Guard is setting up a 1,000-bed hospital at the convention center in Manhattan. In California, the state is bringing offline hospitals back into the health care system and FEMA is in the process of building mobile hospitals. And the U.S. Navy is sending hospital ships to California and New York.

In Michigan, some sites that could be available are hotels, which have high vacancy rates as a result of the coronavirus, TCF Center in Detroit and dorm rooms at universities that have closed up campuses during the health crisis.

While waiting for field hospitals, the state is coordinating with hospitals in southeast Michigan to transfer patients from overloaded hospitals to facilities that have vacant beds. The state is asking hospitals outside of southeast Michigan to allocate 10 percent of their beds to overflow patients from other hospitals.

"We'll be coordinating on where those patients go and make sure we're offloading them in the best way possible," said Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, chief medical executive of the state.

The news comes as hospitals, including Beaumont and Henry Ford Health systems, are at or near capacity with the number or coronavirus patients they're treating.

Beaumont has been adding 100 coronavirus patients a day this week, said John Fox, president and CEO of Beaumont Health.

With more than 2,200 confirmed cases and at least 43 deaths statewide as of Wednesday afternoon, Michigan's eight regional emergency health care coalitions have been activated, Fox said, working together to get a true picture of the size and scale of the outbreak and shifting resources to hospitals in need while sending patients to hospitals with more availability.

At Henry Ford Health System, 304 people were hospitalized with COVID-19 and another 107 people were admitted and waiting for test results as of Wednesday afternoon at its five hospitals in Detroit, West Bloomfield, Clinton Township, Wyandotte and Jackson.

Bob Riney, president of healthcare operations and chief operating officer, said the health system has moved patients who don't have the novel coronavirus from its hospital downtown to make additional room for COVID-19 patients.

It also turned two floors of the Henry Ford Medical Center at Fairlane in Dearborn into a 15-bed inpatient unit for patients who do not have the virus.

Henry Ford Macomb has converted eight operating rooms into a 16-bed unit for COVID-19 patients and Henry Ford Wyandotte has converted surgical units to a dedicated COVID-19 unit, increasing the number of ICU beds from 18 to 32.

Mich. coronavirus numbers now at 2,856

By JULIE MACK
mlive.com

The number of people diagnosed with the coronavirus COVID-19 in Michigan took another big jump, reaching 2,856 on Thursday, March 26, up from 2,295 the day before.

That includes almost 1,400 cases in Wayne County.

The number of Michigan coronavirus cases has more than doubled in the past three days, although health officials say that's partly due to a significant increase in testing.

Sixty people have died, according to the state's daily update on coronavirus numbers. That's up from 43 on Wednesday.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services reported 564 new cases on its daily update, setting another record for a one-day increase.

The numbers have spiked since last week, when the state began to significantly increase the number of people tested for the coronavirus.

"Originally, you only had the state Bureau of Laboratories doing the testing," said Linda Vail, Ingham County's health officer. Last week, some hospitals and private laboratories began performing tests, "and a lot of these test results are now getting dumped into the system."

Fifty-two of Michigan's 83 counties are home to a resident who contracted coronavirus.

About 84 percent of the COVID-19 cases are in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties.

The disproportionate number of cases in metro Detroit is a result of several factors, including the area's large population, more aggressive testing in those counties and community spread of coronavirus, said Lynn Sutfin, spokeswoman for the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

About 39 percent of Michigan residents live in Wayne, Oakland or Macomb counties.

LOTTERIES

Thursday drawings

Michigan

Poker Lotto
3C-6C-8D-6H-8S
Midday Daily 3
4-2-7
Midday Daily 4
2-1-9-8
Daily 3
5-9-4
Daily 4
2-7-2-3
Fantasy 5
05-16-24-28-33
Estimated jackpot
$505,000
Keno
06-07-08-11-13-23-24-31-35-36-37-39-41-42-49-51-54-55-62-69-74-76
Mega Millions jackpot
$107 million
Powerball jackpot
$160 million

Wednesday drawings

Michigan

Classic Lotto 47
02-03-15-35-45-47
Poker Lotto
JC-QC-2D-4D-9S
Midday Daily 3
0-0-3
Midday Daily 4
0-2-3-2
Daily 3
1-5-4
Daily 4
2-3-8-6
Fantasy 5
04-09-13-21-25
Keno
01-04-10-18-30-36-37-38-39-46-49-52-55-58-59-62-66-67-68-69-74-75
Mega Millions jackpot
$107 million
Powerball jackpot
$150 million
Cash 5
02-28-32-39-41
Estimated jackpot
$80,000

Indiana

Cash 5
02-28-32-39-41
Estimated jackpot
$80,000
Cash4Life
05-24-26-40-52, Cash Ball: 1
Lotto Plus
09-12-14-33-38-46
Quick Draw Midday
06-07-09-10-23-26-30-31-34-42-55-56-62-63-64-65-68-70-75-78, BE: 23
Daily Three-Midday
3-3-5, SB: 8
Daily Three-Evening
9-3-4, SB: 6
Daily Four-Midday
3-3-6-7, SB: 8
Daily Four-Evening
7-7-4-7, SB: 6
Quick Draw Evening
01-02-06-07-10-17-19-20-28-32-34-36-37-42-43-44-50-55-56-58, BE: 17
Hoosier Lotto
02-04-26-27-33-40
Estimated jackpot
$2.7 million

Illinois

LuckyDay Lotto Midday
01-02-05-33-36
Pick Three-Midday
9-9-6, Fireball: 1
Pick Three-Evening
5-0-3, Fireball: 3
Pick Four-Midday
6-5-2-6, Fireball: 6
Pick Four-Evening
8-2-2-5, Fireball: 4
Lucky Day Lotto
02-05-17-25-45
Estimated jackpot
$850,000

– The Associated Press

Michigan hospitals asked to open space for coronavirus patients

By LAUREN GIBBONS
mlive.com

Southeast Michigan hospitals overwhelmed with COVID-19 patients will begin shifting patients to other hospitals around the state, Chief Medical Executive Dr. Joneigh Khaldun said Thursday.

Speaking at the Michigan Capitol Thursday morning, Khaldun said Michigan is beginning implementation of a "load balancing plan" for hospitals, asking hospitals outside of Southeast Michigan to serve as relief hospitals and accept patients from other hospitals that are currently at or near capacity.

"We already have hospitals who are stepping up to be a relief hospital and are starting this process," she said. "We will remain flexible so that every community has the healthcare resources that it needs to address the spread."

The load balancing would apply for both COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 patients, according to the governor's office.

Khaldun said Michigan officials are also working on developing a plan for alternate sites outside of hospitals to care for patients who may have COVID-19 "should we need them."

Some Michigan universities, including Oakland University and Grand Valley State University, have offered up dorm rooms as a possible alternative.

The news comes as Beaumont Health, which operates eight hospitals in Wayne and Oakland counties, approaches capacity while caring for hundreds of confirmed or possible COVID-19 cases. Health care systems around the state are currently eyeing their capacity limits as they prepare to treat patients with respiratory issues caused by COVID-19.

The region has been the hardest hit in Michigan, with about 89 percent of cases – 2,046 of 2,295 – occurring in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties.

During Thursday's press conference, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer reiterated that the state badly needs more personal protective equipment and other items in hospitals, saying hospital gowns, ventilators, hand sanitizer, gloves, surgical masks and no-touch thermometers are among the items Michigan health care workers need most.

She said the state has secured 13 million N95 masks, 226,000 surgical masks, 35,000 hospital gowns, more than 4 million gloves, nearly 100,000 face shields, 250 beds and thousands of gallons of hand sanitizer, but said, "It's still not nearly enough to meet our need."

Sarett Spring Virtual Stampede

This years 5K Trail Run and Walk will be turned into a Virtual event. From April 11th-April 19th, participants may complete that distance on their own. Run in your neighborhood, park, treadmill, or our 5K course here at Sarett.

Funds raised from this event help Sarett Nature Center continue its programs for over 10,000 school children each year.

Entry fee is $25. Registration deadline is April 1st.
Entries received by April 1st will be guaranteed a t-shirt.
$1 for 1-mile kids' fun run
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https://runsignup.com/sarettspringstampede
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hp LOCAL & STATE

BENTON HARBOR

City needs more money for water, sewer operations

Failure to raise funds would jeopardize $15M project

By LOUISE WREGE
HP Staff Writer

BENTON HARBOR — Benton Harbor officials learned Wednesday that the city needs to generate another $1.3 million each year to cover costs to operate and maintain the city's water and sewer systems, along with current and proposed debt.

At risk is the almost $15 million water and sewer project they recently approved to fix some of the aging system's worst problems, according to Chris Cook, president of Abonmarche, the city's engineering firm.

He spoke during the city's Personnel and Finance Committee meeting Wednesday, which was livestreamed via ringcentral.com due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's "Stay Home, Stay Safe" executive order.

City officials plan to hold a workshop in the next two weeks to discuss ways to generate the money. A plan needs to be in place by mid-April, Cook said, although that may change due to the pandemic.

He said the additional revenue is being required by the state's Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy, based on a financial study done by Baird.

One way to raise the money would be to increase sewer and water rates, which haven't been raised since at least 2013. To generate the money through a rate increase, Cook said sewer rates would have to be raised 25 percent, and water rates raised 42 percent.

Two other sources of revenue that could be used are the city income tax money and the money the state provides through the Michigan Transportation Fund, which is usually around $300,000.

If a mix of the three sources is used, he said water and sewer rates could be raised 20 percent, with MTF and the city income tax chipping in $250,000 and $500,000 respectively.

"There are an infinity of options to solve this issue," he said.

Some committee members balked at the idea of raising water and sewer rates. Other members didn't like the idea of using city income tax money for anything except roads, sidewalks and alleys.

But City Manager Ellis Mitchell said something has to be done.

He said that if incremental increases had been made over the years to the sewer and water rates, a large increase wouldn't be necessary.

"Understand that the life of the system is in jeopardy right now," he said.

And he said that to only consider the pavement of the roads for city income tax money and not what's under the roads is a "falsehood."

"You can say that the income tax money is for fixing the streets, but if you won't fix what's under the streets, you won't have any streets," he said.

Cook said the projects were chosen because they needed both sewer and water line work to be done, meaning that the entire road needs to be torn up to do them, giving the city the added benefit of having some new roads. They were identified based on three studies Abonmarche has been working on since 2014.

"These are very old lines ... and have a high probability of failure," he said.

If they fail, he said the streets above them will be damaged.

The city has qualified to receive low-interest loans from the state to cover almost 66 percent of the costs, with the rest of the money, about $5 million, coming from the city. The city also qualified to receive $1.4 million in loan forgiveness from the state. Besides roads, almost $500,000 of the money is slated to be used to fix the water tower at the corner of Britain Avenue and 8th Street.

The locations of the rest of the proposed projects are: Pipestone from Main Street to Vineyard; Michigan, Wall and Highland from south of Oak to Jefferson; Vineyard from Pipestone to east end; Maple from Pipestone to Cedar; Highland from Territorial to Highland; Territorial from Winans to Seeley; and Stevens from Riverside to Waukonda.

Proposed work on the Benton Harbor Water Plant on Ridgeway Street has been taken out of the project.

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Don Campbell / HP staff

Tyler Whitaker, general manager at Lambrecht's Liquor Store in St. Joseph, checks on his stock of whiskey Thursday afternoon.

Keeping your spirits up

Corona beer, Virus Vodka hot sellers at one liquor store

By MAXWELL HARDEN
HP Staff Writer

The COVID-19 outbreak has affected every facet of the economy, with liquor stores no exception.

But not all the news is doom and gloom where spirits are sold.

Barney's grocery store in New Buffalo saw a spike in beer and liquor sales in recent weeks as the news went from bad to worse.

"Business has increased for us," said Barney's liquor department manager Brett Nover. "For a seasonal-type town, we went from winter sales to summer sales overnight. A lot of people from Illinois have second homes here and are living here while this crisis is happening. Everyone came in and did some panic shopping but we haven't had any problems with stock yet.

"Our suppliers have been consistent so our shelves remain stocked."

Just as customers are buying grocery items and cleaning products, they're also making sure to stock up on alcohol.

"Instead of buying six bottles of wine, they'll buy 12," Nover said. "Especially since restaurants and bars are closed."

Tyler Whitaker, manager of Lambrecht's Liquor Store in St. Joseph, was confident that liquor stores across the state would be deemed essential businesses by governor Gretchen Whitmer before her "Stay Home, Stay Safe" executive order that went into effect Tuesday morning.

"We figured we'd be in the clear just because of the revenue from the sales tax and everything we bring in," he said. "The fact that New York left their liquor stores were open was a good sign, not to mention the bars closing. As an hourly worker, I'm very thankful that we're open."

According to Whitaker, business at Lambrecht's fluctuates depending on the day. But there is one product in particular he says has been popular with customers.

"Corona," he said. "Corona sales have been booming. People have also been buying Virus Vodka. It's something people can laugh about, which is good."

Some stores, like Midtown Party Store in Bridgman, have been negatively impacted by the shelter-in-place order.

"Business was OK until Wednesday," Midtown Party Store owner Bhola Singh said. "Since the stay-at-home order, business has died down. We're hurting right now. It's hard to get employees to come into work because they don't want to risk getting sick. It's a tough time."

Congress may pass a $2.2 trillion stimulus package today in a bid to hold off a virus-induced recession. Singh hopes the government comes through.

"I think the government should step up and help," he said. "Sometimes liquor stores like ours get left behind, but I'm hoping they step up. Because if this pandemic lasts multiple weeks, it will be hard to pay the bills."

Singh owns several liquor stores and convenience stores in Southwest Michigan and Northern Indiana. According to Singh, there was a break-in at his Mishawaka, Ind. store last week and the thief stole 15 cases of alcohol.

According to numbers released by the Department of Labor on Thursday, weekly unemployment claims rose to 3.3 million, the most weekly jobless claims in history. Singh worries that an increase in convenience store robberies may be on the horizon.

"This is a big issue right now," Singh said. "A lot of people are living week to week. When people don't have money, they won't shop. If we don't get help, people may resort to robbing."

Some customers may be hesitant to venture to a liquor store in today's climate, so stores are doing their best to give customers peace of mind.

"We've been taking extra steps," Whitaker said. "We're wiping our door handles, doorknobs and coolers. We're doing everything we can to keep things as clean as possible. I'm sure a lot of businesses are doing this and it's something we've been working at."

The future of the economy remains uncertain, but liquor store owners and managers are optimistic that the industry will stay afloat.

"I fully believe we'll bounce back just fine," Whitaker said. "Hopefully with Whitmer's executive order, we can squash this virus. A lot of the local breweries are still pumping out really good beer. It's great that people are still able to work. I'm blessed to be able to get hours at these strange times."

"The good thing about alcohol," Nover said, is that "when times are hard, people drink. When times are good, people drink. I don't see sales going down any time soon."

Watervliet schools to pay hourly employees during school closure

By ALEXANDRA NEWMAN
HP Staff Writer

WATERVLIET — The Watervliet school board took action Thursday night to ensure that all of its staff would be paid during the school closure due to the coronavirus emergency.

In a virtual meeting, the school board approved a letter of agreement with the district's support staff union to pay them through April 13, the day schools are for now scheduled to reopen.

"Our support staff would have ran out of sick days and time off fairly quickly," Superintendent Ric Seager said. "We want to sustain their payment during this."

He said the agreement would basically turn any days the staff are not working because of the school closure into paid snow days.

Affected personnel includes custodians, secretaries and paraprofessionals, who are paid hourly.

The board also approved the same agreement for transportation and food service workers, though they have been working during the closure to provide meals to students.

Seager said this would give the district the option of rotating out some of those workers to give them a day off and give the custodians, secretaries or paraprofessionals days to work.

He said the agreement also gives the district flexibility to extend it if the state keeps the schools closed for longer.

The way the paydays fall, the agreement will keep support staff paid through April 24.

The agreement does waive the 30-day notice for layoffs and it specifically says that it will not set a precedent for the future.

Seager said he will meet with teachers and principals today, virtually, to see where the students are at, and to come up with some plans for next steps going forward.

"We're going to make a shift on the instructional side that will hopefully give more clarity for the kids and their families," he said. "I've heard questions from a lot of them, especially seniors about graduation. We want to make sure we have answers for them."

Contact: anewman@TheHP.com, 932-0357, Twitter: @HPANewman

IN BRIEF

Fire out quickly in Benton Harbor

BENTON HARBOR — A fire at a house in Benton Harbor early Thursday morning was put out by firefighters in about 10 minutes.

Michael Phelps, deputy director of fire services for the Benton Harbor Department of Public Safety, said the department was called at 5:45 a.m. to a house at 1235 Ogden Ave. after a neighbor smelled smoke.

He said the house was unoccupied and he did not have the homeowner's name readily available. Phelps said the fire appears to have started in a closet, but the cause remains under investigation.

Benton Harbor firefighters were assisted by the St. Joseph Department of Public Safety. Phelps said. No one was injured.

Van Buren scales back court hours

PAW PAW — Van Buren County courts will remain open during the COVID-19 crisis, but hours of operation are being scaled back.

Chief Judge Kathleen Brickley announced Thursday that courts will only be open to conduct essential functions between the hours of 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The limited days and hours will last through April 13.

All other matters will be adjourned or addressed as outlined in the court's emergency operations plan. Normal operations will resume at 8:30 a.m., April 14 pending further updates.

While buildings will be closed to the general public, filings can be made by mail, email, fax or placed in the drop box located near the entrance of court facilities.

"Whether it is working remotely from home or using technology to conduct hearings, Van Buren County Courts have adapted to continue to serve our community," Court Administrator Frank Hardester said in a news release.

Information line set up for area seniors to call for COVID-19 assistance

By HP STAFF

ST. JOSEPH — The Region IV Area Agency on Aging has set up an info-line to help senior citizens receive the help they need as the COVID-19 pandemic continues.

"With older adults at higher risk of serious illness due to COVID-19, and being encouraged not to go out, it is important that we connect, identify, and meet, the needs of those who have no choice but to remain home," said AAA Chief Operating Officer Christine Vanlandingham in a news release. "Many of them have highly specific needs that are not being taken care of."

The 24-hour info-line is 800-654-2810. It is staffed with aging and disability experts able to provide answers and resources specific to local seniors' needs.

The agency serves people over the age of 60 in the counties of Berrien, Van Buren and Cass.

The agency is also accepting donations, which allow staff, or screened volunteers, to purchase goods specific to what local seniors need and will provide for safe delivery, reducing the risk and possibility of exposure. Visit areaagencyonaging.org/donate, to offer a donation.

Area Agency on Aging is currently working on a volunteer structure that will offer even greater support to area seniors during this time. The agency will announce this information within the next week on its social media pages. For more information, go to: areaagencyonaging.org.

PRIME TIME TV

FRIDAY EVENING MAR. 27

	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30
ABC (7) (10) (41) (57)	Wheel of Fortune	Shark Tank (N) (DVS)		:01 20/20			
CBS (2) (3) (22)	Ent. Tonight	MacGyver (N)		Hawaii Five-0 (N)		Blue Bloods "Friends in High Places"	
NBC (5) (8) (16)	NBC5 News	The Blacklist "Corne-lius Ruck" (N)		Dateline NBC (N)			
FOX (17) (22) (28) (32)	Modern Family	WWE Friday Night SmackDown (N) (L)				Fox 17 News at 10:00PM (N)	
PBS (34)	Overheard	Washing-ton Week	Fir-ing-Hoover	Somewhere South (Series (P)) (N)		The Inn at Little Washington	
CW (25)	Big Bang Theory	Charmed "Third Time's the Charm"		Dynasty "Up a Tree" (N)		News	Seinfeld
MNT (39)	Family Feud	Chicago P.D. "She's Got Us"		CSI: Miami Recalling the team's formation.		CSI: Miami "Hostile Takeover"	
WCIU (26)	Mike & Molly	Charmed "Third Time's the Charm"		Dynasty "Up a Tree" (N)		2 Broke Girls	2 Broke Girls
WHME (46)	:00 Heart-land	Heartland Amy steps in to help Georgie.		Highway to Heaven		The List (N)	Celebrity Page (N)
WGN (9)	News	black-ish	black-ish	Last Man Standing	Last Man Standing	WGN News at Nine (N) (L)	
A&E	5:00 Live PD	Live PD: Rewind (N)		Live PD "Live PD -- 02.15.19"			
AMC	:00 ★★★ Hacksaw Ridge ('16, War) Andrew Garfield, Sam Worthington, Luke Bracey.					:05 ★★★ Gran Torino ('08)	
Animal	Tanked	Tanked: Sea-Lebrity Edition (N)				Tanked	
BET	All About	★★ Stomp the Yard ('07, Drama) Columbus Short.					
Big Ten	BTN in 60	BTN Basketball in 60		BTN Basketball in 60		BTN Basketball in 60	
Bravo	:00 Shahs of Sunset	Shahs of Sunset		Shahs of Sunset "Vida's Court" (N)		★ Friday After Next ('02) Ice Cube.	
Cartoon	Steven	Final Sp.	Final Sp.	Burgers	Rick	American	American
Cinemax	6:50 The Sitter	:15 ★★★ The Rundown ('03, Adventure) The Rock, Seann William Scott.				Strike Back (N)	
CMT	Last Man	Mom	Mom	Mom	Mom	Mom	Mom
CNBC	Shark	Shark Tank		Shark Tank		Shark Tank	
CNN	OutFront	Anderson Cooper		Cuomo Prime Time		CNN Tonight	
Comedy	South Pk	South Pk	South Pk	South Pk	South Pk	South Pk	South Pk
Discovery	:00 Gold Rush	Gold Rush "Hunt for New Ground" Parker seeks a gold-rich claim. (N)					
Disney	Bunk'd	Sydney	Coop	:15 Zombies 2 ('20)			Sydney
DIY	Stone	Beachfrnt Reno		Beachfrnt Reno		Beachfrnt Reno	
E!	Next Frdy	★★ Next Friday ('00) Ice Cube.				★ 21 Jump Street	
ESPN	:00 ESPN Original Documentaries					ESPN Documentaries	
ESPN2	:00 Wimbledon Classic Matches (N)					Wimbledon Classic	
ESPNC	Football	Top Rank Classi		Top Rank Classi		Classic-Boxing	
Food	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners
Fox News	The Story	Tucker Carlson		Hannity (N)		The Ingraham Angle	
Fox Sports	NBA Basketball: Pistons at Celtics				Pistons Live		Focused
Freefrm	6:00 Hercules	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy
FX	Jurassic World	★★★ Spider-Man: Homecoming ('17, Action) Tom Holland. Peter Parker harnesses his new powers to battle the Vulture.					
Golf	PGA Tour	LPGA Tour Golf				PGA Tour	
Hallmark	Love Slopes	Christmas at Graceland: Home for the Holidays ('19) Adrian Grenier.				Golden Girls	Golden Girls
HBO	Blinded Light	7:55 The Plot Against America		8:54 The Plot Against America		Real Time With Bill Maher	
History	Pawn	Pawn Stars		Pawn Stars (N)		:03 Pawn Stars (N)	
HGTV	Property	Dream	Dream	Dream	Dream	Dream	Dream
Learning	90 Day	90 Day Fiancé: Before the 90 Days (N)				90 Day	90 Day
Lifetime	King of Queens	King of Queens	King of Queens	King of Queens	King of Queens	King of Queens	King of Queens
MSNBC	Decision	All In With		Rachel Maddow		The Last Word	
MTV	Rush Hr 3	Ridic.	Ridic.	Ridic.	Ridic.	Ridic.	Ridic.
NBCSCH	Sports	Pregame	To Be Announced				
NFL	NFL Total	A Football Life		A Football Life		A Football Life	
Nick	Maze	Dylan	Substitute	Sponge.	Sponge.	Friends	Friends
NGEO	Lockup	Lockup: Tampa		Lockup: Tampa		Lockup: Tampa	
Oxygen	:00 Dateline: Secrets Uncovered "A Villainous Plan" (N)			Murdered by Morning "Last Call"		Murdered by Morning "Dead of Winter"	
Parmt	:00 ★★ Shooter ('07) Mark Wahlberg.					★ Four Brothers	
Showtime	6:45 ★★ The Best of Enemies ('19) Taraji P. Henson.			The Trade (N Subtitled)		★★ Captive State ('19)	
Starz	Whole 9 Yards	★★★ Once Upon a Time... in Hollywood ('19) Leonardo DiCaprio, Brad Pitt. (P).					:44 Out-lander
STZENC	:14 ★★ The Vow ('12) Rachel McAdams.			★★★ Dazed and Confused ('93) Jason London.			Forrest Gump
SyFy	★★★ John Wick: Chapter 2 ('17, Action) Keanu Reeves, Common, Laurence Fishburne. (DVS)						Vagrant Queen "A Royal Ass-Kicking"
TBS	★★★ Kong: Skull Island ('17) Tom Hid-dleston, Samuel L. Jackson. (DVS)				:45 ★★ San Andreas ('15, Action) Dwayne Johnson.		
TCM	The Haunt-ing	★★ Million Dollar Legs ('32)		:15 ★★★ Dinner at Eight ('33) Marie Dressler, Jean Harlow. (DVS)			
TMC	Demolition Man	★★★ Scrooged ('88) Bill Murray, Karen Allen.				:45 The Professor ('18) Johnny Depp, Zoey Deutch.	
TNT	:00 Bones	★★★ The Dark Knight Rises ('12, Action) Christian Bale.					
Travel	Ghost	Ghost Nation		Kindred Spirits (N)		Portals to Hell (N)	
TV Land	Andy G.	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	Two Men	Two Men
USA	:35 ★★★ Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire ('05) Daniel Radcliffe. Voldemort lays a trap for Harry at the Triwizard Tournament. (DVS)						
VH1	RuPaul	RuPaul's Drag Race (N)				Madea's Family	
WGN-A	Last Man Standing	Last Man Standing	Last Man Standing	Last Man Standing	Last Man Standing	Last Man Standing	Last Man Standing

Parents still in the dark about sibling's sexual abuse

Jeanne Phillips
Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I was sexually abused by a sibling for 10 years during my childhood. I never told anyone what happened to me until I confided in my fiance after we were engaged. I have gone through counseling sessions and am at a place in my life where I am happy and healthy.

Currently, I have a relationship with my parents, but not with my sibling. My parents often express their wish for me to have a relationship with my sibling, but I always refuse. I feel that telling them what happened at this point would only cause hurt for them. But I also feel that if I tell them, I can stop getting asked uncomfortable questions. What do you suggest? – Survivor In South Dakota

DEAR SURVIVOR: I suggest you tell your parents everything. It's something you should have done years ago. Do not worry about hurting them. Once they have all the facts, they will understand why you want nothing to do with your sibling and stop pushing you to have a relationship with your abuser, and that's the goal.

DEAR ABBY: I have been in a relationship with a man for five years, and we are deeply in love. We want to spend the rest of our lives together, but it bothers me that he wants to go into the military for three to five years. He says he wants me to wait for him, but three to five years seems like a lifetime to me. I can't help but feel like he is prioritizing his desire to serve his country over me and years of our life together. – Civilian In The East

DEAR CIVILIAN: It would be interesting to know how old you and your boyfriend are. I assume you are both young and graduating from high school.

This is not necessarily a question of where his priorities lie. While three to five years seems like a large chunk of time, the military may provide your boyfriend with the chance to decide what he wants to do career-wise with his life. It would also provide benefits that could positively affect his future – and yours – once his term of service is finished. If you feel unable to wait for him, you should let him go.

DEAR ABBY: My mother is 88 and in a nursing home. While cleaning out her apartment, I found her will. With it there was a handwritten note stating that my son should get my mother's diamond ring. The ring is unique and special. The note specifically said that my sister's kids should not get the ring because they didn't act like they loved her, while my son did. The note instructed my son to give the ring to his wife.

I have not shown the note to my sister because I know she will be upset. I want to give the ring to my son. I know my sister will see the ring on my daughter-in-law's finger and know it was my mom's. My sister will wonder how she got the ring. What should I do? – Hurt In Ohio

DEAR HURT: Do not approach your sister with this information until you have spoken to an attorney. Show him or her the will you found in your mother's apartment and the note that was with it. If your mom is able, have the ring details added to the will. In order to avoid any misunderstandings and a possible rift in the family, your sister should be given a copy of both. After that, take your lead from the attorney.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

My husband earns more, so thinks he should do less at home

Carolyn Hax

HI, CAROLYN: My spouse and I work full-time. He makes three times as much as I do. Recently we had an argument in which I asked him to help more around the house without me having to explicitly ask him to. His rebuttal was that he hates his job but feels like he has to stay there to finance our "lifestyle" and, therefore, should not be expected to contribute to general cleaning and upkeep. The bulk of the child-rearing duties is on me, because I earn significantly less. He thinks my job isn't as valuable. It's a good salary for what I do, but doesn't come near his six figures. I feel it's unfair to blame me for his employment choices, on top of making me feel worthless. I've told him multiple times we can make it work if he wants to get a job he's happier with. Those lifestyle standards are HIS, not mine. I feel these are very fundamental differences between us. I always knew he had a much more patriarchal attitude. But this has gotten worse over time, especially when I took a new job where I am happier but have a more erratic schedule than at my previous jobs. He thinks a high salary is more important than personal happiness. He refuses to look at it from my perspective. It's clear he resents me for wanting him to help more around the house, for him having a career he doesn't enjoy, and for me having a career I do enjoy but with less flexibility in terms of picking up and dropping off kids and staying at home with them as needed. The salary difference wasn't a big deal in the past, either, and my career in nonprofits is hardly going to afford me any chances for a salary commensurate to his. In fact, he's pushing for me to quit my career and be a stay-at-home mom. My career is not something I'm prepared to sacrifice, even if it isn't making the big bucks. Where do I even go from here? – C.

C.: All the logistics in your question can be kneaded and tweaked into something more manageable for both you and your husband. Two people who have mutual respect as their baseline can write down their home responsibilities; their *hours spent* at work (not dollars earned, ugh); and their work- and home-related stress levels (1 to 10, no inflating), for the purpose of black-and-white, spell-it-out comparison. Examine "lifestyle" expenses, too.

This is an annoying process, soul-sucking even, but it's also too common in couples not to "see" what the other contributes. Often both ways. We tend to think we're hard-working and awesome and so we mentally round up what we do, and round down what others do, and lovingly cultivate our individual senses of grievance because we're human and terrible that way. Talk about soul sucking. So, the side-by-side lists, and their drudgy little epiphanies.

None of that, though, would touch the problem of being married to someone who thinks you have less value as a person than he does. If that's the case, then you have a terrible choice to make: be with this husband, or co-parent with this ex-husband. As always, a well-chosen therapist – go solo – can help you sort it out.

Email Carolyn at tellme@washpost.com, follow her on Facebook at www.facebook.com/carolyn.hax or chat with her online at noon each Friday at www.washingtonpost.com.

CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Obscure
5 JAMA readers
8 Night crawler
12 Meditative discipline
13 Fair-hiring letters
14 Water, in Tijuana
15 Building extensions
16 Balance sheet pro
17 Face cover
18 Brand of spandex
20 Strut with pride
22 — Wiedersehen
23 Chestnut case
24 Stroll
27 Horticultural art
30 Geese formation
31 Logging tool
32 Not prepaid, for short
34 That, to Juanita
35 Sweater sizes
37 Mire
38 Team cheer
40 Thorax
42 Rowboat need
43 Taro root paste
44 Where Tripoli is
46 Returnable bottle
49 Wise one
50 In vogue
52 Orange skin
54 Scroll cabinets
55 Snake River loc.
56 Air France hub
57 Second to none
58 Ocean dweller
59 Closeout

DOWN
1 So long!
2 Lounge about
3 Not pretty
4 Mischief-maker
5 Type of coffee
6 Sales-person
7 Orator's perch
8 Falters
9 Type of arch
10 Destroy
11 Bad, for Yves
19 Paris street
21 Viking letter
24 Wide st.
25 Webbing
26 Swain
27 Blowout
28 Highest point
29 Cash substitutes
33 Insect killer
35 Fracture photo (hyph.)
36 Town in oaters
39 Vigorous
40 Web suffix
41 Zoo heavy-weights
43 Bicycle part
44 Decoy
45 Irritates
47 Prefix for "trillion"
48 Bellow
49 Chatter
51 Sonnet cousin
53 Soap ingredient

Answer to Previous Puzzle

C	H	I	L	E			I	S	L	E	T	
L	E	V	I	E	D		A	R	G	Y	L	E
O	R	A	N	G	E		M	A	T	R	I	X
G	E	N	E		F	I	B		E	A	T	
			R	A	I	N	O	U	T			
A	R	C		M	E	D		M	A	V	S	
M	E	L	T	E	D		P	O	A	C	H	
Y	E	A	R	N		T	I	S	S	U	E	
	D	Y	E	D		M	I	R	E	D	Y	
			E	S	T	A	T	E	S			
C	A	R		V	E	T		W	I	S	E	
U	S	E	D	U	P		E	V	A	D	E	D
B	E	F	O	R	E		R	O	L	L	E	D
E	A	S	E	L			W	E	E	D	Y	

JUMBLE

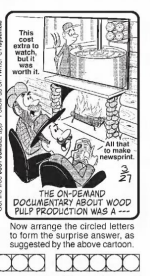
Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

IRPVE

FWREA

MYCLPO

TURVIE


This cost extra to watch, but it was worth it.
All that to make a newsprint.
THE ON-DEMAND DOCUMENTARY ABOUT WOOD PULP PRODUCTION WAS A ---
Get the free JUST JUMBLE app for iOS or Android
Tribune Media Services

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

"_____" - _____ - _____

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: MONEY SALAD UNFAIR CRANKY
Answer: There'd been some burglaries in their neighborhood, which was — CAUSE FOR ALARM

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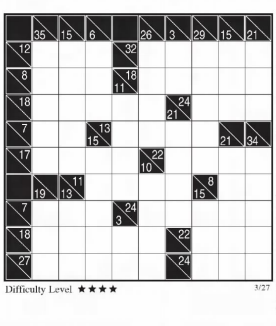
KAKURO



How to play: Numbers above the slash are across clues; numbers below the slash are down clues. The goal is to enter digits 1-9 in the white cells to add up to the number clues. You cannot use any digit more than once when adding up to a clue.

Difficulty Level ★★★★

3/27

BRIDGE

The British comedy team of Eric Morecambe and Ernie Wise used a two-liner based on the honors awarded biannually by the Queen.

"My name is Colonel Napoleon Davenport, DSO, MC, OBE."

"That's a funny way to spell 'Davenport.'"

In yesterday's column, East made an unexpected second-hand-high honor-card play. In today's deal, there might be an eye-opening honor-card play, or declarer might have a chance for an unusual coup. Can you see both? South is in four spades. What happens if West leads either the spade king or the club jack?

In the auction, North has a middling game-invitational limit raise. Five trumps and a respectable four-card side suit are good; two queen-doubletons are bad. But in a noncompetitive auction do not jump to four spades, mentioning the Law of Total Tricks, when you have so many points.

If West leads a top spade, East should discard the heart ace! Wake up partner with an honorable signal. Yes, East could play the jack, which would presumably work, but the ace is much clearer ... and much more fun.

What happens after the club-jack lead?

South has a decision to make. If the spades are 1-1, he can play a trump. But if the spades are 2-0, that risks instant defeat. His only chance is to play on diamonds, hoping the defender with both trumps has at least three diamonds. Or, if the trumps are 1-1, the diamonds are 3-3. Then, on the last diamond, declarer can discard a heart loser. He concedes only two spades and one heart.

North 03-27-20
♠ J 10 7 3 2
♥ Q 4
♦ A J 9 6
♣ Q 5

West
♠ A K
♥ 10 6 5 3
♦ 7 5 2
♣ J 10 9 8

East
♠ —
♥ A K J 9 8
♦ 10 4 3
♣ 7 6 4 3 2

South
♠ Q 9 8 6 5 4
♥ 7 2
♦ K Q 8
♣ A K

Dealer: South
Vulnerable: East-West

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	1♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

Opening lead: ♠ A or ♣ J

SUDOKU

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

	2				8		1	5
				2			7	
		7	9	4			6	
4	6							
1		5		3		6		8
							5	1
	4			8	7	1		
	3			1				
8	1		3				2	

3/27

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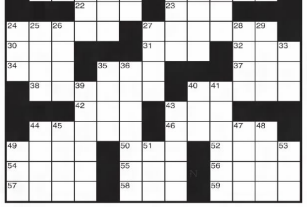
How to play: Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9.

PREVIOUS SOLUTION

7	5	3	4	2	8	9	1	6
4	8	2	9	1	6	5	7	3
1	9	6	7	5	3	8	2	4
5	3	4	2	8	9	1	6	7
6	7	8	3	4	1	2	5	9
9	2	1	6	7	5	4	3	8
8	4	7	5	6	2	3	9	1
3	6	5	1	9	4	7	8	2
2	1	9	8	3	7	6	4	5



3-27

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BEETLE BAILEY

BLONDIE

MR. B, HAVE YOU EVER HAD ANY WILD ADVENTURES?
WELL, ELMO, ONE TIME I WENT TO AN AIRFIELD TO GO SKYDIVING
WOW! YOU WENT SKYDIVING, MR.B.?!
NOT EXACTLY... AFTER I GOT THERE, I CHANGED MY MIND
THAT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE MUCH OF AN ADVENTURE, MR. B.
MAYBE NOT, BUT I DID DISCOVER A NEW PIZZA PLACE ON THE WAY BACK HOME!
3-27

HI & LOIS

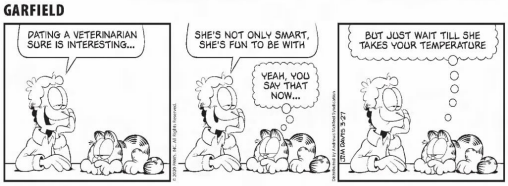
BC

WIZARD OF ID

DILBERT

THE MORON I HIRED KEEPS WATCHING TED TALKS AND GETTING SMARTER.
HE'S ONLY ABOUT THREE TED TALKS AWAY FROM TAKING YOUR JOB.
THERE MUST BE A WAY TO SLOW HIM DOWN.
I'LL SEE IF I CAN INTEREST HIM IN INSTA-GRAM.

GARFIELD


DATING A VETERINARIAN SURE IS INTERESTING...
SHE'S NOT ONLY SMART, SHE'S FUN TO BE WITH
YEAH, YOU SAY THAT NOW...
BUT JUST WAIT TILL SHE TAKES YOUR TEMPERATURE
JIM DAVIS 3-27

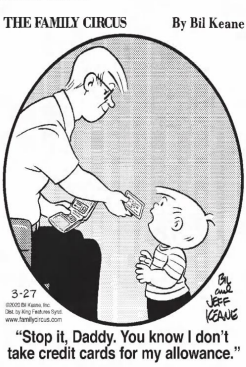
FORT KNOX

I JUST HEARD FROM THE RUNNER'S LAWYER.
WHAT DOES HE WANT?
MONPO.
YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING!?
I'M AFRAID NOT! HE PEMANPEP MONPO BE SENT OVER NOW.
TO ANIMAL CONTROL?
TO HIS MOTHER-IN-LAW.
3-27

PICKLES

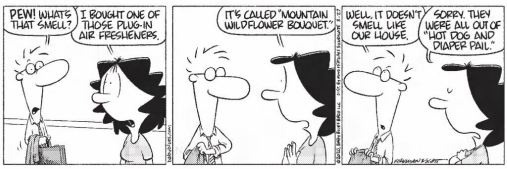
ISN'T THERE SOME SORT OF ATTACHMENT FOR THIS THING TO REACH INTO TIGHT SPOTS?
YES. IT'S RIGHT HERE. YOU JUST ATTACH IT TO THIS HOSE LIKE THIS.
GOOD. THAT OUGHT TO DO THE TRICK.
WHAT TRICK IS THAT?
I NEED TO SUCK OUT THE TIP OF A COTTON SWAB THAT CAME OFF INSIDE MY EAR.
OF COURSE YOU DO.

FAMILY CIRCUS



DENNIS THE MENACE

BABY BLUES


PEW! WHAT'S THAT SMELL?
I BOUGHT ONE OF THOSE PLUG-IN AIR FRESHENERS.
IT'S CALLED "MOUNTAIN WILDFLOWER BOUQUET."
WELL, IT DOESN'T SMELL LIKE OUR HOUSE.
SORRY. THEY WERE ALL OUT OF "HOT DOG AND DIAPER PAIL."

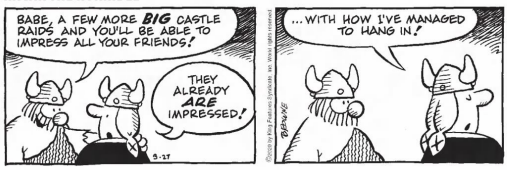
CURTIS

OKAY, I CHANGED A LIGHTBULB, TOOK OUT THE GARBAGE AND BROUGHT IN THE MAIL!
FIVE DOLLARS?! I WON'T ACCEPT LESS THAN FIFTY!! MY TIME IS VALUABLE
3-27
I MEAN, OH BOY, FIVE DOLLARS!

ZITS

I'M WORKING ON A PERSONAL ANTHEM.
I WANT TO SHARE ALL OF THE STRUGGLES AND DISAPPOINTMENTS I FACED AS A CHILD.
I CALL IT "INCONSISTENT ICE CREAM TRUCK."
YOU'RE SO BRAVE.

HAGAR THE HORRIBLE


BABE, A FEW MORE BIG CASTLE RAIDS AND YOU'LL BE ABLE TO IMPRESS ALL YOUR FRIENDS!
THEY ALREADY ARE IMPRESSED!
3-27
...WITH HOW I'VE MANAGED TO HANG IN!

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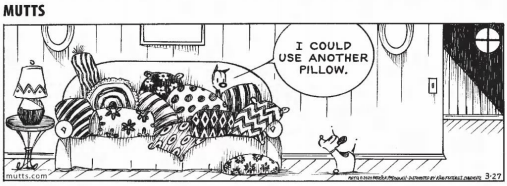

SALLY FORTH

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WHAT... WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
KEEFE
TRYING TO DO OUR WHOLE "READ EACH OTHER'S THOUGHTS" THING. WOW, I GOT NOTHING. THERE REALLY IS A DISTANCE BETWEEN US!
3-27

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hp SPORTS

Bears finalize 2-year deal with Graham

By ANDREW SELIGMAN
Associated Press

LAKE FOREST, Ill. — Jimmy Graham insisted he can become a dominant tight end again. And he looks forward to showing it in Chicago.

The Bears finalized a two-year contract with the former All-Pro and one-year deals with six other players on Thursday.

The Bears hope Graham can rediscover the form that made him a star with New Orleans and Seattle before getting released by Green Bay two weeks ago. That would give them a huge boost at a position where they got little production last season, and help boost an offense that ranked among the NFL's worst.

"This opportunity is everything for me," Graham said. "I take it extremely serious. I'm excited for us to get by this as a country so I can get back to work and march my way back up to the top, because I've always said, if I didn't think I had the ability to dominate this league then I wouldn't play anymore.

"But I still believe that I have that ability and I'm going to take each and every day and take each and every game to prove myself worthy of being on this team and I'm going to give them everything I got."

The NFL has placed restrictions on travel and access to team facilities because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"This is kinda the first world event, to this magnitude, since probably World War II," Graham said. "A lot of people are struggling and a lot of people are hurting as we just live day by day. And to go kinda through this, to see my second free agency period, just like everyone else is going through, it's been completely different and just weird. As I think everyone here in America and all across the world, every day for them is kinda weird, to see empty streets and to be at home trying to get through this."

Steve Helber / Associated Press

Oriole Park at Camden Yards is closed on what would've been Opening Day on Thursday in Baltimore, Md.

Darron Cummings / AP / AP

Simon Pagenaud, of France, leads the field through the first turn on the start of the Indianapolis 500 IndyCar auto race at Indianapolis Motor Speedway in 2019. The Indianapolis 500 scheduled for May 24 has been postponed until August because of the coronavirus pandemic and won't run on Memorial Day weekend for the first time since 1946. The race will instead be held Aug. 23.

Indianapolis 500 postponed until August because of COVID-19

By JENNA FRYER
AP Auto Racing Writer

The Indianapolis 500 was postponed Thursday until August because of the coronavirus pandemic and won't run on Memorial Day weekend for the first time since 1946.

The race will instead be held Aug. 23, three months later than its May 24 scheduled date.

"The month of May at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway is my favorite time of year, and like our fans, I am disappointed that we have had to reschedule the Indianapolis 500," said Roger Penske, the motorsports titan who finalized his purchase of IndyCar and Indianapolis Motor Speedway earlier this year.

"However, the health and safety of our event participants and spectators is our top priority, and we believe that postponing the event is the responsible decision with the conditions and restrictions we are facing," he said. "We will continue to focus on ways we can enhance the customer experience in the months ahead, and I'm confident we will welcome fans with a transformed facility and a global spectacle when we run the world's greatest race."

The Indianapolis 500 began in 1911 but did not run in 1917, 1918 and from 1941-45 because of World Wars I and II. Tony Hulman bought the neglected speedway after the second war and the Indy 500 returned on Memorial Day weekend in 1946.

It has been scheduled for that weekend every year since, a familiar fixture for untold millions of fans over the years. Although inclement weather has occasionally disrupted the prestigious race, it had never been outright rescheduled until now.

"In times like this it is all about leadership and communication. We have both in IndyCar and NASCAR," said Chip Ganassi, who fields cars in both series. NASCAR has not altered its plan to resume racing May 9.

Postponing the Indy 500 was an inevitable decision but still had to be difficult for Penske, who has already pumped millions into capital improvements to ready the historic speedway for its first 500 under new ownership.

"It's a shame Roger has to go through this in his first year of owning Indianapolis Motor Speedway but you couldn't have a better man in charge," said A.J. Foy, a four-time Indy 500 winner and team owner. "It will still be the Indy 500.I never thought we'd see it like this, but all of the sports field has been affected. I'm just glad that we will be able to race."

Penske Entertainment Corp. President and CEO Mark Miles said the series chose the August date to get away from extended delays caused by the coronavirus shutdown. The series did not choose Labor Day weekend out of fear of disrupting fans' traditional plans.

The Indy 500 honors the military before the race, and Miles said the August date gives the speedway "a unique and powerful opportunity to honor the contributions and heroism of the doctors, nurses, first responders and National Guard members serving on the front lines of the fight against COVID-19."

Miles also thanked NBC, which took over broadcasting the marquee race just last year from ABC. NBC is already scrambling after this week's postponement of the Tokyo Olympics to 2021; the games had been scheduled to open July 24 and run for nearly three weeks.

Penske had been eagerly anticipating the March 15 start of the IndyCar season, but was forced to suspend the series 48 hours before the scheduled opener in St. Petersburg, Florida, when the coronavirus was declared a pandemic.

Four races were initially scrapped and IndyCar said it would resume racing May 9 on the road course at Indy. The opening race is now listed as May 30 at Detroit, but the schedule is in flux.

The Indy road course race will now be run on July 4, a day before NASCAR races at The Brickyard in an unprecedented doubleheader between the series. St. Pete now is listed at the bottom of the schedule with no date listed.

Miles said if the race can be rescheduled, it would be as the season finale in October.

Twinbills? Winter windup? Baseball's 2020 could be creative

By DAVID BRANDT
Associated Press

PHOENIX — It's been another ideal week of March weather in central Arizona, with highs in the 70s and plenty of sunshine.

Perfect for an opening day baseball game between the Arizona Diamondbacks and Atlanta Braves that isn't happening as planned because of the coronavirus pandemic. That reality was starkly apparent on Thursday, as a nearly deserted Chase Field sat in strange silence.

But the pleasant weather was also a reminder of what could happen when and if the games resume. After all, it's a lot like what November or even December baseball would feel like in this part of the world.

In the upside-down universe of Major League Baseball – which is on hold until at least mid-May and quite possibly longer as the world fights the coronavirus spread – just about anything is possible if the 2020 season ever begins.

"Every year, you hope to host the World Series," Arizona owner Ken Kendrick said earlier this month when discussing options for a pushed back season, including neutral sites in the playoffs.

"Maybe we have a little edge in that happening," he said.

His comment drew a few laughs and Kendrick grinned, too, but he added that he wasn't trying to make jokes about a serious situation like the coronavirus spread. While a neutral-site World Series seems a bit far-fetched, these are strange times, and the sport must adjust as it figures out what the season might become.

"There are still a lot of unknowns, and our leadership team is working tirelessly to make sure our organization is handling this situation the best we can," Washington GM Mike Rizzo said. "It's a very, very fluid situation, and this thing is not in the general manager's manual."

While no one knows exactly what will happen, here are a few options if games can be played:

Let's play two

It's hard to envision teams playing the traditional 162-game season if games don't begin until mid-summer. But one way to squeeze in action would be a throwback option: Scheduled doubleheaders.

Doubleheaders were once a regular part of MLB's schedule but have mostly faded away with the exception of make-up games due to weather. The 2020 season could be different, with teams playing eight or even nine games in a week.

If that's the case, there would be talk of expanding rosters to help keep players – especially pitchers – from getting overworked. MLB had already changed the rules to allow 26 players on the active roster this season and that number could jump to 28 or even 30 in a condensed situation.

Twins pitcher Taylor Rogers said the teams and the players would want to play as many games as possible.

"It's in both of our best interests to do that and it's in the fans' best interest," Rogers said. "So, I think whatever thing we can put together to get the most games in, everybody's going to win on that account."

Past time

Baseball has made schedule adjustments on the fly before. Nearly 40 years ago, there was a strike in the middle of the 1981 season that wiped out games for nearly two months from of a season known for Fernando Valenzuela's electric rookie season and the Dodgers' World Series win.

The season was split into two halves and the playoffs expanded to eight teams from the usual four. The division winners from each half played each other before eventually moving on to the league championship series and World Series. Teams played around 110 games in the regular season – Pete Rose breaking Stan Musial's NL career hits record was among the highlights.

Fall ball

The 2020 regular season was scheduled to end on Sept. 27, but it's possible games could be pushed well into October or November. That probably wouldn't be a huge problem in warm-weather cities like Houston and Los Angeles or places with retractable roofs like Toronto.

But November night games in Denver, Chicago or Boston? Brrrrr.

"I think we are going to have to look at some stuff because we all know what baseball in Minnesota could look like in November," Rogers said.

Neutral sites

One solution to cold-weather baseball is moving to neutral sites. The teams could return to their spring training homes in Arizona and Florida in the late fall which would cut down on travel so teams could play lots of games in a short time period.

Having the World Series at a neutral site like Phoenix or Miami would certainly be different. But it seems to work just fine for the Super Bowl.

Get creative

Players and executives all seem to agree on one thing: If baseball is played this season, flexibility will be key.

Could there be doubleheaders with seven-inning games? An expanded playoff bracket or round robin tournaments in neutral-site cities? Some options are more likely than others but there's not much that won't be considered.

One thing is certain: Everyone around the game wants to play as soon as it's safely possible.

"Baseball has always played an important role in getting the country back to normalcy," Hall said. "Whether it was after 9/11 or wartime or in this case, after the coronavirus has been settled. We're going to know that life is back to what it should be when our gates our open."

PHOTO OF THE DAY

Coloma's Karon Smith pushes past South Haven's Keyon Thomas during the first half of a February 18th game at Coloma High School.

While live sports is on hold, The HP is reprinting some of Photo Editor Don Campbell's favorite photos from the recent high school sports season.

Don Campbell / HP staff See more photos:heraldpalladium.mycapture.com

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LEGALS

WATERVLIET CHARTER TOWNSHIP PUBLIC NOTICE

A Public Hearing on the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 budget will be held on Tuesday, March 31 at 2:00 P.M. at the Watervliet Charter Township Hall, 4959 M-140, Watervliet, MI. Due to COVID-19 any questions regarding the budget may be directed to the Clerk, Patricia Bambrick, on March 30 between 10:00 and 11:00 a.m. at 463-5113, and between 1:00 and 2:00 p.m. on March 31 at 269-449-3640. The property tax millage rate proposed to be levied to support the proposed budget will be a subject of this hearing. It is the intent of the Township to levy the maximum allowable millage for the 2020 tax year after all appropriate rollbacks have been applied. Reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired, or other aids and services for individuals with disabilities are available by contacting the Township Clerk at least five days before the meeting.

Patricia Bambrick, Township Clerk

Special Meeting Notice

Hagar Township Board

The Hagar Township Board hold a Special Meeting electronically on Tuesday, March 31st at 7pm in order to discuss:

Review of previous meeting minutes

Bids received for maintenance of Township properties

Bids received for Township auditor contract

Bids received for Township Master Planning

Millage proposal Headlee Recapture

Millage proposal for Fire Vehicle

Request by a property owner to name unnamed lake

Payment of Township bills

Implementation of a Township Postaudit payment policy

Scheduling Public Budget Notice

Citizen Comments

Instructions to access electronic meeting by landline or smartphone.

Residents and interested individuals can join the electronic meeting from their homes by calling:

877 853 5257 US Toll-free

OR

888 475 4499 US Toll-free

Listen to the prompts through the phone and when asked enter Meeting ID: 586 315 392 #
The phone system will ask for a participant ID number, press #

Instructions to access electronic meeting online, using your computer or smartphone's audio/microphone or camera:

Visit this URL: https://us04web.zoom.us/j/586315392

Use Meeting ID: 586 315 392

This notice is posted in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, Public Act 267 of 1976, as amended, (MCL 41.72a(2)(3)) and the Americans With Disabilities Act.

Vehicle Auction

Rogers Wrecker Service is auctioning off a 2016 Chevy Cruz. It has front and driver side body damage and no keys.
Vin #
1G1BE5SMAG7295668

Auction will be held at 742 S Whittaker St, New Buffalo, MI 49117. April 2 2020 2pm-3pm.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SPECIAL NOTICE

It's Time to retire! Catch-Um Lake Bait Shop, fishing ponds and campground will not re-open on April 1st, and will remain closed. Thank you to all my customers for your business and loyalty for the past 35 years.

CARD OF THANKS

Cody Keller and family would like extend their gratitude and appreciation to the many businesses that helped with donations as well as the many individuals that donated items, and/or helped with the event. Then benefit dinner for Cody Keller was a great success and shows how a community call pull together.

EMPLOYMENT

SALES

Cassopolis, MI Regional Sales Manager CHT USA, Inc. Seeking self-motivated, highly skilled sales professional with experience in the personal care industry. Capable of managing retention and acquiring new client relationships. Must have proven history of closing successes and effective communication skills, Territory coverage: Upper Midwest to Texas. Chemical background required with experience in the Silicone industry. Full-time. Home-Base office location negotiable. 50% travel required. Submit resume to: hr.usa@cht.com

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Benton Harbor, MI 3 Pillars Music is looking to buy record albums from 1970s to present, older guitars and music memorabilia. Please contact Tom at 269-313-7001 or 3pillarsmusic@gmail.com

Watervliet, MI Buying junk Vehicles & Scrap Metal Call Ray @ 269-463-3565

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EOE

PMG IN-MI PUBLISHING

HOROSCOPE

By EUGENIA LAST

FRIDAY, MARCH 27

You are overdue for a change. Take a moment to consider how you see your life unfolding and what you need to do to follow the path that you find most inviting. Let your heart be your barometer and your imagination be your canvas. Use your skills diversely to excel.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) Aggressive action won't get you what you want, but having the willpower to turn your idea into a reality will lead to a better future.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) Do what's right and you will make a difference. Don't labor over what you cannot achieve when it's what you can do that counts. Plan a romantic evening with a loved one.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) Your power of persuasion will work on some, but not on everyone. Expect to face opposition if you can't back up what you are asking for with facts and incentives.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) An inevitable change will turn out better than anticipated. Don't waste time; take advantage of an opportunity to explore what's transpired. A financial gain is heading your way.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) Sign up for something you love doing or look for an experience that will help you better understand someone you like. Compromise, and you'll be surprised what you get in return.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) If you follow your instincts, you will find your way to the top. Embrace change to find something or someone that enriches your life. A joint venture will shake things up.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) Look at every angle before you make a decision. Avoid getting involved in someone's melodrama. Discipline and hard work will help you achieve something you've been putting off doing.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) You'll have an exciting thought that will help you expand on a creative project you left unfinished. The time is right to explore, try new things and adopt a lifestyle change.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21) You'll face opposition if you are pushy or you can't back up your statements with facts. Don't pass along secondhand information or exaggerate if you want to avoid backlash.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) An adjustment you make at home will have long-term effects. Invest time and money into something that will bring you closer to the people you love.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 19) Take care of your responsibilities. Don't let others' actions upset you. A change someone makes may not be to your liking, but carry on and don't let it ruin your plans.

PISCES (Feb. 20-March 20) Take control, do your own thing and show everyone what you have to offer. Share your feelings and intentions with a loved one and find out where you stand.

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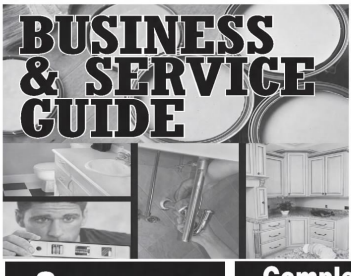
BUSINESS & SERVICE GUIDE



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Trump the weakest link in the chain

E.J. Dionne

In the face of a national crisis, we have a governing system functioning on two tracks. Large parts of it are working like a real government – in Congress, at the state and local levels, and among civil servants and front-line responders. But the presidency is now just a daily talk show, hosted by a self-centered blowhard worried only about his poll numbers.

This leads to big achievements, and to frightening problems. When President Trump, based on absolutely no data or analysis, explained on Tuesday that he wanted coronavirus health restrictions lifted by Easter because "I just thought it was a beautiful time" and because "Easter is a very special day," he told us exactly what we needed to know: Even in the face of death and economic turmoil, there will never be anything serious about his presidency – except for the serious threat it poses to our collective well-being.

The real work in Washington was being done, first, on Capitol Hill. In the early morning hours on Wednesday, Senators across party lines agreed on a $2 trillion stimulus bill. It's imperfect, and we'll likely need more. But it's far better than the original proposal by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.

The opportunity for this authentic give-and-take was brought to life not by sermons about civility but by fear and sheer political power. All sides are petrified about the possibility of economic collapse. Democrats made good use of their control the House of Representatives and McConnell's need for Democratic senate votes.

Thus, the final bill is more generous than the original draft to those in real need – in its unemployment insurance provisions and in providing the poorest Americans with the lump sum payment from which they were originally excluded. The corporate bailout section has at least some accountability features, and significant sums will be spent to help our threatened hospital systems and state and local governments.

Of course, the proposal could have done more for the least advantaged – guarantee health insurance to everyone (isn't that a logical policy goal in a pandemic?) and to expand other forms of help to those most in need. And, yes, many progressives and libertarians will always have a healthy skepticism about government largesse toward big corporations. But the economy badly needs this record-breaking relief and – while nothing is certain in life or in Congress – it looks likely to happen.

At the state level, New York's Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo is winning praise for his thoughtful, passionate and fact-based daily briefings and for trying to push Trump toward policies he should be pursuing anyway. Cuomo is the most public face of all the governors and mayors who have risen to the occasion, even if some "What? Me Worry?" state leaders – in Mississippi and Florida, for example – have been in denial over the virus' threat.

And let's note how right Cuomo was to praise doctors, health care workers, police officers, firefighters, among others, who are "overcoming their fear ... not for their family, they're doing it for your family." Yes, they are.

Which only sets Trump's failures into sharper relief – his failure to take the crisis seriously at the outset, his failure to set up a comprehensive testing system, his failure to deploy the Defense Production Act to direct the private sector to produce the medical supplies and equipment we need and, above all, his failure to abandon his pettiness and self-involvement.

This is why Trump's impulsive effort to start what amounts to a culture war over whether to lift health restrictions is so terrifying. As former Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers argued in The Washington Post, prematurely lifting restrictions could mean we "have to start the whole process over – and from a worse starting point."

Trump doesn't care, because he's seeking an alibi for his own shortcomings. He'd love to say that our economic troubles are all the fault of public health experts. Arbitrarily calling for an end to social distancing policies (which he doesn't control anyway) at "a beautiful time" on "a special day" got him exactly the headlines he wanted.

We do need a debate about how and when to transition back to a functioning economy – from "a big pause" to "a big restart," as conservative economist James Pethokoukis put it. But that discussion needs to be informed by far more testing, and by a genuine concern for our fellow Americans who are most vulnerable to the virus. We can pray that these deliberations will be led by the rational people in the functioning parts of government. They need to protect us from the reckless blame-shifter and excuse-maker in the White House.

E.J. Dionne is a columnist for The Washington Post.

LETTERS

Trump threatens health, safety of our nation

Editor,

From the beginning of the novel coronavirus outbreak (COVID-19), Donald Trump has repeatedly misrepresented the seriousness of this threat to the American people. He has also repeatedly misrepresented the extent to which his administration has succeeded in controlling the spread of this illness. Some examples:

Jan. 22 – "We have it totally under control."

Feb. 25 – "You may ask about the coronavirus, which is very well under control in our country. We have very few people with it, and the people that have it are … getting better. They're all getting better."

Feb. 28 – "My administration has taken the most aggressive action in modern history to prevent the spread of this illness in the United States. We are ready. We are ready. Totally ready."

Because of his denial of the problem and focus on blaming all others – China, Italy, France – Trump failed to institute effective actions stateside to curb the spread of this serious illness. The need for testing was minimized, so the extent of the problem could not be determined. The need for personal protective equipment for medical personnel and ventilators for seriously ill patients was minimized, so a severe shortage was allowed to develop. The need for additional hospital beds was minimized, so needed capacity was not created. In fact, we learned that we are not ready.

As Trump continued to misrepresent the seriousness of the problem and failed to take effective action to curb the spread of the virus while patting himself on the back for how smart and great he is, the number of infected Americans continued to rise. By March 26 there were nearly 70,000 confirmed cases and more than 1,000 fatalities. Those totals will undoubtedly increase in the weeks and months ahead.

Trump's incompetence and dishonesty are serious threats to the health and safety of our country. He should have listened more closely to his very knowledgeable advisors to begin advising people to stay home much sooner rather than giving false promises that all would be well.

We need a new leader! We need someone who will focus on protecting the health and welfare of the people of this country now and stop his lying to boost his fragile ego and his personal corporate profits.

We are all paying the price today.

Bette Pierman
Benton Harbor

America's faith-based groups are stepping up

By EMILIE KAO and ANDREA JONES

When the Rev. Jay Vorhees, pastor of City Road Chapel just outside Nashville, Tenn., saw dozens of people in his community laid off as restaurants and bars were forced to close because of COVID-19, he started a fund to buy grocery store gift cards to help them get through the crisis.

Such charity, happily, is not uncommon. Across America, people of faith and religious organizations – spurred by President Donald Trump's call to pray and act in response to this crisis – are finding innovative ways to meet the medical, financial and spiritual needs of their neighbors.

Religious organizations, long at the forefront of America's health care system, are playing a vital role in combating COVID-19. Seventeen percent of America's hospitals are faith-based, with Catholic hospitals hosting one in every six of the nation's hospital beds and Seventh-Day Adventists treating over five million patients each year. As American cases of COVID-19 have surged, their services have become critical to the country's ability to treat patients and stop the disease's spread.

Churches and other religious communities are also finding other ways to increase the public health system's capacity to respond to the virus. Despite having to suspend worship services, Alabama's largest church found a new way to serve. In close coordination with the state government, Birmingham's Church of the Highlands began hosting a drive-thru COVID-19 test site. The church has run a medical clinic since 2009 and in just two days, qualified medical personnel staff tested nearly 1,000 people.

And America's faith-based organizations aren't only responding to COVID-19 in the United States. Samaritan's Purse, a North-Carolina based Christian relief organization, recently airlifted a field hospital and medical personnel to the city of Cremona in northern Italy, which is suffering from a shortage of hospital beds and medical equipment due to the virus.

Houses of worship and faith-based charities are also mobilizing to meet their neighbors' material and financial needs. Miriam's Kitchen, an interfaith ministry in Washington, D.C., normally provides hot meals to the hungry, but they have rapidly shifted to providing takeout meals served in the church's courtyard instead of its basement to allow for greater social distancing. Ministries such as Miriam's Kitchen have been around for years and are trusted by their communities, making them especially effective in times of crisis.

In California and Michigan, faith-based ministries are donating and distributing groceries for the elderly and medically vulnerable. They're also providing meals to children who have lost access to school breakfasts and lunches because of coronavirus-related closures. And several Muslim organizations banded together to raise over $200,000 for low-income families impacted by the crisis.

In times of great stress, religious organizations are also equipped to provide mental, emotional and spiritual support. Many Americans' lives have been upended, some are battling illness and others are struggling with uncertainty and loneliness as they self-quarantine. In a time of social distancing, religious leaders are finding new ways to convey encouragement to their congregations. J.D. Greear, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, recorded a video message to pray for church members and encouraged them to seek out ways to safely serve their neighbors.

Campus ministries, already embedded in the lives and communities of students, are repositioning themselves to support students faced with sudden disruption. Hillel, a campus ministry to Jewish students, launched an initiative to provide virtual meetups for students who are now physically separated from community. A Christian ministry, Cru, helped students pack up and move out of their campus housing.

As the Department of Health and Human Services Center for Faith-Based and Opportunity Initiatives noted in a COVID-19 guidance statement: "Faith-based and community leaders continue to be valuable sources of comfort and support for their members and communities during times of distress. They have the unique ability to address potential concerns, fears and anxieties regarding COVID-19. Additionally, by reiterating simple hygienic precautions and practices, these leaders can broadly promote helpful information."

As they have throughout our history, America's faith-based organizations are reaching out to their neighbors by keeping them informed and by meeting their material, social and spiritual needs. Their trusted relationships and local knowledge are enabling them to respond effectively to the emergency, doing invaluable work that governments are not always able to perform.

In the ongoing battle against the coronavirus, they are giving strength and spreading hope to Americans as they face the days ahead.

Emilie Kao is Director of the DeVos Center on Religion and Civil Society at The Heritage Foundation. Andrea Jones is a researcher for the DeVos Center.

When words really matter

Kathleen Parker

Not since 9/11 has the importance of eloquence been so apparent.

For the past several days, Americans have heard two public officials' very different ways of speaking and learned why fluency and persuasion are so critical in times of crisis. This is true not only of content but also of bearing: How do the words and poses chosen by our leaders inform morale as we hunker down in our homes?

On one screen Monday, President Trump spoke at length about himself (and at times about COVID-19). More than once, he wandered off script, at one point talking about how many billions of dollars he could have made had he not become president. But, he added, he was glad he had because he's now a wartime president and, presumably, one was to infer, the country needs him.

How are people supposed to feel when they hear this? To each his own, but I fear that a selfish child is in control of our fates.

On another screen, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo updated New Yorkers and the nation on the virus in his state. Unlike Trump's self-indulgent soliloquies, Cuomo's statements were straightforward, honest, factual and, despite the dire statistics, refreshingly reassuring. He understands that adults can absorb information and respond appropriately.

As of Tuesday, Cuomo reported that New York had more than 25,000 cases of COVID-19, about seven times more than New Jersey, which has about 3,600 cases, and more than 10 times the number of the next two most infected states, California and Washington, each of which have around 2,200 cases. The apex of New York's crisis will come sooner and will be higher than expected, he said. The state has only about two to three weeks before the worst-case scenario arrives. Cuomo said the state needs 30,000 ventilators before then.

Cuomo came down hard on the federal government for stockpiling 20,000 ventilators desperately needed in New York. He suggested that the feds deploy the ventilators according to need, then rotate them out to the next state as its apex is reached, and so on.

"How can we be in a situation where you can have New Yorkers possibly dying because they can't get a ventilator, but a federal agency saying I'm going to leave the ventilators in the stockpile?" he asked. "I mean, have we really come to that point?"

No doubt, many are wishing Cuomo were president right now, as suggested by a hashtag trending on Twitter – #CuomoForPresident. His in-charge demeanor and straight talk remind us of what a leader looks and acts like.

Trump has done some good things, such as closing down traffic from China and speeding up the use of experimental drugs, but there's more he could and should do. Only on Tuesday did reports emerge that the administration would formally implement the Defense Production Act to secure production of masks and test kits. This is such an easy call, but Trump dilly-dallied. He equivocated. He scared people.

Monday, he and Cuomo expressed nearly the same idea but in such different ways. Guess which one was terrifying and which sounded plausible and realistic?

Trump signaled that he was thinking of "opening up" the country to avoid allowing the cure to be worse than the problem. He probably meant that shutting down the economy might hurt the U.S. more than the virus. His solution, however, would be to end lockdowns even as the virus is spreading.

Cuomo framed nearly the same idea in a vastly different way. Explaining that we had hit pause to grapple with the sudden crisis, he said it was now time to begin thinking about how to re-enter the private sector. He suggested that young, healthy people might be able to go back to work, as could those who have had the virus and are now immune.

One man drops a word bomb; the other explains his thoughts in logical fashion so that people can follow his reasoning and arrive at the same conclusion.

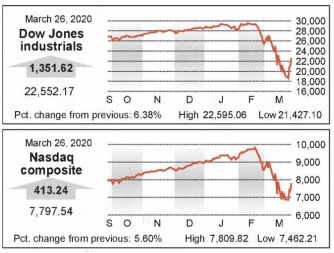
We like to say that some people are just "born leaders," but we all know, instinctively, that the best leaders are not so much born as made, made in unexpected moments they didn't choose and could not have foreseen. George W. Bush's most-eloquent moment consisted of 11 words. "I can hear you! The rest of the world hears you!" he shouted through a bullhorn to first-responders as they dug through the debris of the World Trade Center. In those few words, Bush connected the world to America and made America's loss the loss of a wider world.

Cuomo's moment has arrived. As he wrapped up Tuesday morning, his throat seemed to tighten as he expressed his love for New York and said: "At the end of the day, my friends, even if it is a long day ... love wins, always, and it will win again through this virus."

Give that man a bullhorn.

Kathleen Parker is a columnist for The Washington Post. Her email is: kathleenparker@washpost.com.

MARKETS



Amer Elec Power AEP
$81.80 +10.35 +14.5%
▼ 4-wk. -11.0% ▼ YTD -13.4%

Whirlpool WHR
$83.20 +8.75 +11.8%
▼ 4-wk. -36.7% ▼ YTD -43.6%

Local Stocks

NAME	TICKER	52-WK RANGE LO	HI	CLOSE	CHG	%CHG	WK	MO	QTR
AT&T Inc	T	26.08	39.70	30.60	+2.20	+7.7	▲	▼	▼
AEP	AEP	65.14	104.97	81.80	+8.51	+11.6	▲	▼	▼
Apple Inc	AAPL	170.27	327.85	258.44	+12.92	+5.3	▲	▼	▼
AutoZone	AZO	684.91	1274.41	884.99	+40.56	+4.8	▲	▼	▼
BP PLC	BP	15.51	45.38	24.42	+.13	+0.5	▲	▼	▼
CMS Eng	CMS	46.03	69.12	56.94	+3.62	+6.8	▲	▼	▼
CocaCola	KO	36.27	60.07	44.29	+2.68	+6.4	▲	▼	▼
Comcast	CMCSA	31.71	47.74	36.74	+3.17	+9.4	▲	▼	▼
Deere	DE	106.14	180.48	139.09	+10.60	+8.2	▲	▼	▼
Disney	DIS	79.07	153.41	105.36	+4.63	+4.6	▲	▼	▼
DollarTree	DLTR	60.20	119.71	78.14	+1.77	+2.3	▲	▼	▼
ExxonMbl	XOM	30.11	83.49	38.82	+1.53	+4.1	▲	▼	▼
FifthThird	FITB	11.10	31.64	17.32	+2.50	+16.9	▲	▼	▼
1stSource	SRCE	26.07	53.42	32.74	+2.41	+7.9	▲	▼	▼
FordM	F	3.96	10.56	5.25	-.14	-2.6	▲	▼	▼
GenElec	GE	5.90	13.26	8.12	+.56	+7.4	▲	▼	▼
HomeDp	HD	140.63	247.12	195.21	+13.45	+7.4	▲	▼	▼
HorizBcp	HBNC	7.42	19.48	9.77	+.76	+8.4	▲	▼	▼
HuntBncsh	HBAN	6.85	15.63	8.50	+.86	+11.3	▲	▼	▼
IDEX	IEX	104.56	178.14	125.81	+6.45	+5.4	▲	▼	▼
IBM	IBM	90.56	158.75	112.89	+7.04	+6.7	▲	▼	▼
JPMorgCh	JPM	76.91	141.10	98.12	+6.39	+7.0	▲	▼	▼
JohnJn	JNJ	109.16	154.50	126.57	+7.17	+6.0	▲	▼	▼
Lowes	LOW	60.00	126.73	88.11	+4.39	+5.2	▲	▼	▼
McDnlds	MCD	124.23	221.93	167.35	+4.37	+2.7	▲	▼	▼
Microsoft	MSFT	115.52	190.70	156.11	+9.19	+6.3	▲	▼	▼
MillerHer	MLHR	14.39	49.88	23.75	+1.68	+7.6	▲	▼	▼
Penney	JCP	0.36	1.51	.40	-.01	-3.6	▼	▼	▼
Perrigo	PRGO	40.17	63.86	46.54	+1.79	+4.0	▲	▼	▼
Pfizer	PFE	27.88	44.56	31.75	+2.00	+6.7	▲	▼	▼
ProctGam	PG	94.34	128.09	107.38	+6.46	+6.4	▲	▼	▼
RepubSvc	RSG	65.37	100.91	77.40	+5.66	+7.9	▲	▼	▼
Steelcse	SCS	7.02	23.02	11.19	-.36	-3.1	▲	▼	▼
Stryker	SYK	124.54	226.30	163.33	+10.28	+6.7	▲	▼	▼
TCF Finl	TCF	16.96	47.46	27.03	+3.49	+14.8	▲	▼	▼
Target	TGT	70.03	130.24	96.07	+5.03	+5.5	▲	▼	▼
TractSupp	TSCO	63.89	114.25	83.48	+6.55	+8.5	▲	▼	▼
UPS B	UPS	82.00	125.31	99.78	+5.28	+5.6	▲	▲	▼
VerizonCm	VZ	48.84	62.22	53.54	+3.60	+7.2	▲	▼	▼
WEC Engy	WEC	68.01	109.53	86.77	+6.03	+7.5	▲	▼	▼
WalMart	WMT	96.79	128.08	109.82	+.42	+0.4	▼	▼	▼
WalgBoots	WBA	40.52	64.50	45.67	+4.23	+10.2	▼	▼	▼
Wendys Co	WEN	6.82	24.04	13.95	-.47	-3.3	▲	▼	▼
Whrlpl	WHR	64.00	163.64	83.20	+.81	+1.0	▲	▼	▼
Worthgtn	WOR	19.28	44.69	25.57	+2.92	+12.9	▲	▼	▼
XPO Logis	XPO	38.47	100.18	58.82	+5.33	+10.0	▲	▼	▼

PRODUCE PRICES

The following fruit prices were recorded on the Chicago Terminal Market on Wednesday. Prices are not net to the growers as freight and selling fees have not been deducted. These prices were provided by the USDA Market News Branch office in Chicago.

APPLES: Cartons tray pack of Washington Extra Fancy 72s Red Delicious sold from mostly $25-26, Golden Delicious sold for $38, Fuji sold from $30-34, Pink Lady brought $38-40, Gala sold from mostly $33-34, and 72 size Honeycrisp sold for $36, with fine appearance offerings $48-50. Cartons of 12 3-pound film bags of Washington WA Extra Fancy 2 1/2-inch minimum Red Delicious sold for $22, while Golden Delicious brought $23, Gala sold for $23-24, while bushel cartons loose of Michigan 3 inch minimum Golden Delicious, Gala and Jonagold brought $20.

ASPARAGUS: Pyramid cartons/crates 11-pound bunched standard size from Mexico sold higher for $25, while large white bunched from Peru sold lower for $18-20. Organic standard size green offerings from Mexico sold from mostly $22-24.

BEANS: Bushel cartons/crates of round green type machine-picked offerings from Florida sold lower for $12-14.

BERRIES: Flats of 12 6-ounce cups with lids of medium-large berries from Mexico sold from $28-30, while fine appearance offerings brought $30-32, and organic offerings from California of fine appearance sold steady from mostly $33-34. Strawberries in flats of 8 1-lb containers medium size from Florida sold lower from $6-10, with fine appearance offerings from California brought $24-26, and fine appearance organic offerings from Mexico sold for $32.50.

BROCCOLI: Cartons of 14 bunches from Arizona/California sold higher from mostly $19-20, with organic offerings much higher for $40.

CABBAGE: 50-pound cartons of round green medium from Texas sold higher for $19, while red offerings brought $18-19.

CAULIFLOWER: Cartons of 12 film wrapped heads from Arizona/California sold higher for $36, with organic offerings $48.

CORN: Wirebound crates of 4 dozen bi-color and yellow from Florida sold higher from $20-22.

CUCUMBERS: 1-1/9-bushel cartons from Mexico of medium size sold higher for $47, with large higher from $44-45, and carton 24s sold from mostly $23-24. Pickles of 200-300 size from Mexico steady sold higher for $40.

EGGPLANT: 1-1/9-bushel cartons of 24-count eggs from Mexico sold higher for $28-30, with medium offerings from Florida $25.

LETTUCE: Cartons film wrapped 24 heads of iceberg lettuce from Arizona/California sold higher for mostly $26-28, while organic offerings brought $32.

ORANGES: Cartons of 10 4-pound film bags of Florida 80 size Valencia juice oranges sold for $22.

PEPPERS: 1-1/9-bushel cartons of Florida green jumbos sold sharply higher for $35, with extra-large and large $34 and choppers $23.50. Medium size jalapeno peppers from Mexico sold for $19-20, while extra-large poblano sold from $20-22, serranos brought $26-28, and medium Hungarian wax sold from $24-26.

SQUASH: 4/7-bushel cartons of small zucchini sold for $23 with medium zucchini from Mexico from $22 while small-medium size yellow straight-neck sold lower for $27, with medium size mostly $33. 1 1/9-bushel cartons from Mexico of large size acorn sold higher for $28, while butternut small sold for mostly $20-22, and spaghetti mostly $18-19.

TOMATOES: 25-pound cartons loose mature greens 5x6s from Florida sold from $14-16, and cartons 2-layer offerings from Mexico of 4x5 size sold slightly lower from $14-16. Flats 12 1-pint containers with lids of light red-red medium size grape tomatoes from Florida sold lower for mostly $9-11, with offerings from Mexico lower for $12. Cartons of 12 1-pint baskets of cherry type red from Florida sold much lower for $12. Plum tomatoes packed in 25-pound cartons loose of extra-large size from Mexico sold lower from $17-19, with large size $16-17.

Ottawa County creates email for reporting 'stay-at-home' violations

By JOHN TUNISON
mlive.com

OTTAWA COUNTY — Ottawa County has created an email address to take complaints about people violating Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's "stay-at-home" order during the coronavirus crisis.

Many local police departments have advised people to call their non-emergency numbers or, in the city of Grand Rapids, the numbers 311.

In Ottawa County, those with violation reports should email StayHomeStaySafeComplaints@miottawa.org

Whitmer's order took effect Tuesday, March 24 and was intended to keep all "non-essential" workers at home an effort to prevent further spread of COVID-19.

She clarified her view of the order Tuesday and said that people involved in activities that are not "life-sustaining," or they are not part of critical infrastructure, they should stay at home.

A violation, a misdemeanor citation, is punishable by a $500 fine and up to 90 days in jail.

Ottawa County sheriff's deputies said an officer will review the emails and evaluate them for appropriate action. The person making the email should include the date/time, business name, address and description of the violation they believe is occurring.

Complaints may then be transferred to the appropriate police agency for review.

"Our goal is to educate the public and not be forced into a situation where we have to enforce the law by citation," said Ottawa County sheriff's Capt. Mark Bennett.

Wyoming police on Thursday issued a statement regarding the governor's order, asking the public to do their best to comply.

"We remind everyone that the orders are enforceable as criminal misdemeanor violations but more importantly we hope and expect our community will adhere to a common social contract in this difficult time and make enforcement unnecessary," Wyoming police Capt. James Maguffee said in a written statement.

Death notices

Peggy Gordon, 78, of Niles died March 25, 2020, at Lakeland Medical Center, St. Joseph. Brown Funeral Home and Cremation Services, Niles, 683-1155.

Wilhelm Hoffmann, 86, of Coloma died March 26, 2020, at home. Purely Cremations – Starks Family Funeral Homes and Cremation Services, Benton Harbor, 926-9440.

Marion Kelm, 90, of St. Joseph died March 25, 2020, at Lakeland Medical Center, St. Joseph. Starks & Menchinger Chapel and Cremation Services, St. Joseph, 556-9450.

Kevin Warford, 50, of Niles died March 23, 2020, at Trail Point Assisted Living, South Bend, Ind. Brown Funeral Home and Cremation Services, Niles, 683-1155.

Stephen Bryan Zuhl, 67, of St. Joseph died March 25, 2020, at home. Calvin Funeral Home, Hartford, 621-4101.

BIRTHS

Lakeland Medical Center – St. Joseph

Benton Harbor – Girl, 7 pounds, 2 ounces, Michelle Bensinger-Mills and Heath Mills, 5:21 p.m. March 25.

Benton Harbor – Boy, 8 pounds, 12 ounces, Shannon and Adam Layendecker, 8:12 a.m. March 24.

Coloma – Boy, 9 pounds, 10 ounces, Joanna Gambrell and Mike Goetz, 11:06 a.m. March 20.

Coloma – Girl, 8 pounds, 15 ounces, Ashley and Daniel Hill, 2:23 p.m. March 23.

Coloma – Boy, 7 pounds, 5 ounces, Natalie and Joshua Petiprin, 9:23 p.m. March 19.

St. Joseph – Girl, 6 pounds, 13 ounces, Kyah and Nick Culp, 7:47 p.m. March 23.

St. Joseph – Boy, 7 pounds, 7 ounces, Jackie Banks Goebel and Jay Goebel, 6:22 p.m. March 25.

St. Joseph – Boy, 8 pounds, 1 ounce, Justyc and Joseph Newnum, 7:09 a.m. March 22.

MARRIAGE LICENSES

ST. JOSEPH — The following marriage licenses have been issued by Berrien County Clerk Sharon Tyler.

Antonia Dalyn Brown and Dequail DeAnte Pulliam, both of Benton Harbor.

Haley Diane Dickey of Niles and Andrew Michael Ward of Mishawaka, Ind.

Crystal Heather Kling and Andrew James Haas, both of Watervliet.

Kelly Marie Miller and Dana Miles Cantrell, both of St. Joseph.

U.S. hospitals rush to find beds for virus patients

By CARLA K. JOHNSON and NICKY FORSTER
Associated Press

SEATTLE — With her due date fast approaching, Kelly McCarty packed a bag with nursing tops, a robe, slippers and granola bars. Last week's ultrasound, she said, showed "this baby is head down and ready to go."

But the new coronavirus has thrown her a curveball, bouncing her and about 140 other expectant moms from their first-choice hospital to another 30 minutes away. The birth unit at the Edmonds, Washington, hospital is needed for COVID-19.

With capacity stretched thin, U.S. hospitals are rushing to find beds for a coming flood of patients, opening older closed hospitals, turning single rooms into doubles and re-purposing other medical buildings.

Louisiana is making deals with hotels to provide additional hospital beds and has converted three state parks into isolation sites for patients who can't go home. Illinois is reopening a 314-bed suburban Chicago hospital that closed in September. In Seattle, Harborview Medical Center is turning a homeless shelter into a 45-bed coronavirus recovery center.

In New York, the city's convention center is being turned into a temporary hospital. At Mount Sinai Morningside hospital, heart surgeons, cardiologists and cardiovascular nurses now care for coronavirus patients in a converted cardiac unit. Floating hospitals from the U.S. Navy are heading to Los Angeles and, eventually, New York. Military mobile hospitals are promised to Washington state. Arizona officials are seeing if closed hospitals could be reopened.

Simple math is spurring the preparation. With total U.S. cases doubling every three days, empty intensive care unit beds, needed by an estimated 5 percent of the sick, will rapidly fill.

U.S. hospitals reported operating 74,000 ICU beds in 2018, with 64 percent filled by patients on a typical day. But available ICU beds are not evenly distributed, according to an Associated Press analysis of federal data on hospitals that provided a cost report to Medicare in fiscal year 2018.

The AP found more than 7 million people age 60 and older – those most at risk of severe COVID-19 illness – live in counties without ICU beds. AP included ICU beds in coronary units, surgical units and burn units in the count.

Ross D. Franklin / AP

Susie McCann, right, of the Arizona health department, assess a room in the emergency area with a member of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as they tour the currently closed St. Luke's Medical Center hospital on Wednesday in Phoenix to see the viability of reopening the facility for possible future use due to the coronavirus.

"Better to be over-prepared than react in the moment," said Melissa Short, who directs women's health for Seattle's Swedish Medical Center, which is using data from China and Italy as it attempts to double its capacity to 2,000 beds.

In South Korea, some died at home waiting for a hospital bed. In northern Italy, an explosion of cases swamped the hospital system. Video and photos from two Spanish hospitals showed patients, many hooked to oxygen tanks, crowding corridors and emergency rooms.

About 10 days ago, Dr. Tanya Sorensen got a call from the doctor leading the response to the virus at Washington state's Swedish Medical Center. How could the system consolidate its birth services to keep healthy delivering moms away from the sick?

"It took me aback," said Sorensen, medical director for the hospital system's women's services. "It brought home the fact that we are going to be facing a huge surge of cases of COVID very soon."

Swedish's Edmonds facility – where McCarty had planned to deliver – announced Saturday it is closing its 7th floor birth center temporarily, gaining 35 beds for the expected influx. McCarty will go instead to an affiliated hospital in Everett.

"They need more beds. If they can open up a whole floor, I understand," said McCarty, a public school teacher who is busy coaching colleagues about online learning during the state's lockdown.

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia, and death.

If other countries have the same experience as China, 15 percent to 20 percent of COVID-19 patients will have severe illness. About 5 percent could become sick enough to require intensive care.

Equipment is a challenge. About 20 percent of U.S. hospitals said they didn't have enough breathing machines for patients and 97 percent were reusing or otherwise conserving N95 masks, according to a survey conducted last week by hospital group purchasing organization Premier.

Who will staff the needed ICU beds is keeping U.S. hospital leaders awake at night.

In western Massachusetts, Nancy Shendell-Falik, a nurse turned hospital executive, is planning Baystate Health's response. The system's community hospitals and flagship hospital in Springfield are finding space for 500 additional beds, including 140 ICU beds.

She asks herself: Will cross-training staff and working in teams help the ICU nurses handle a surge of patients needing breathing machines? Will there be enough masks, gowns and face shields? She also worries about exhaustion, burnout and nurses falling sick.

"Beds don't take care of patients. We need the staff to do so," she said.

During 9/11, she worked as a chief nurse at a hospital eight miles from the twin towers. She also worked at a Boston hospital that took in casualties of the 2013 marathon bombing. "Those things changed our world forever, but they were very time-limited activities. What's scary about this," she said, is "we don't know the duration."

This weekend, McCarty and her husband plan to drive to the Everett hospital, a trial run for when she goes into labor. When her contractions start, they'll call her dad to come stay with their 4-year-old daughter. McCarty is taking it in stride, knowing the depth of the need.

"If it was my first child, I think it would be a little harder," McCarty said of adjusting her birth plan for COVID-19. "I know what it's like and I've been through it before. Where I deliver isn't necessarily that big of a deal. I'm happy to oblige."

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DO YOU REMEMBER?

25 years ago - 1995

Jim Sanford, head coach at Lakeshore, has been named Region 5 Class B Coach of the Year by the Basketball Coaches Assoc. of Michigan.

St. Joseph girls basketball coach Rick Bloodworth has been named State Coach of the Year in Class B by the Basketball Coaches Assoc. of Michigan. Bloodworth was also Region 5 Coach of the Year in Class B.

35 years ago - 1985

Wolf's Marine Sales' grand opening is this weekend at 250 W. Main St., Benton Harbor – a year after Wolf's Enterprises Marine in St. Joseph was destroyed by fire. Owners Warren and Marjorie Wolf reopened in Benton Harbor last July after purchasing the entire block bounded by West Main, Ninth and Tenth streets. The business handles several lines of boats, Mercury outboards and bills itself as "West Michigan's Largest Marine Accessories and Surplus Dealer."

Wolf's Enterprises also operates a marina on Radio Island, St. Joseph, and Wolf's Paw Paw Lake Marine, Coloma.

50 years ago - 1970

Downtown Benton Harbor greeted a new business yesterday, Robert's Business Machines at 141 Pipestone in quarters that were part of the former Petite Shoppe. Owner of the new business is Robert McEndre, who has 18 years experience in office machines. The new business is an authorized agent for Olivetti-Underwood. It also carries lines of mimeographs and duplicators.

TODAY IN HISTORY

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Today is Friday, March 27, the 87th day of 2020. There are 279 days left in the year.

Highlight in history:

On March 27, 2006, Al-Qaida conspirator Zacarias Moussaoui testified at his federal trial that he was supposed to hijack a fifth airplane on Sept. 11, 2001, and fly it into the White House.

On this date:

In 1513, Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de Leon sighted present-day Florida.

In 1933, Japan officially withdrew from the League of Nations.

In 1945, during World War II, General Dwight D. Eisenhower told reporters in Paris that German defenses on the Western Front had been broken.

In 1958, Nikita Khrushchev became Soviet premier in addition to First Secretary of the Communist Party.

In 1964, Alaska was hit by a magnitude 9.2 earthquake (the strongest on record in North America) and tsunamis that together claimed about 130 lives.

In 1968, Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, the first man to orbit the Earth in 1961, died when his MiG-15 jet crashed during a routine training flight near Moscow; he was 34.

In 1973, "The Godfather" won the Academy Award for best picture of 1972, but its star, Marlon Brando, refused to accept his Oscar for best actor. Liza Minnelli won best actress for "Cabaret."

5-Day Forecast for St. Joseph

Today	Tonight	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
Showers Likely	Showers Likely	Showers Likely	Showers Likely	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy
51°	45°	55° / 46°	48° / 39°	45° / 37°	48° / 39°

Local Outlook

Today we will see mostly cloudy skies with a 75% chance of showers, high of 51°, humidity of 68%. Northeast wind 9 mph. Expect cloudy skies tonight with an 85% chance of showers, overnight low of 45°. East wind 8 to 14 mph. The wind chill for tonight could reach 39°.

Sun and Moon

Sunrise	7:36 a.m.
Sunset	8:06 p.m.
Moonrise	9:23 a.m.
Moonset	11:22 p.m.

First 4/1 · Full 4/7 · Last 4/14 · New 4/22

Local Almanac

Benton Harbor Yesterday

Temperature

High	55°
Low	46°
Normal High	51°
Normal Low	32°
Record High	78° in 2007
Record Low	14° in 2014

Precipitation

Yesterday	0.06"
Month to date	1.50"
Normal for month	2.03"
Year to date	6.42"
Normal Year to date	5.20"

Air Quality

Yesterday 58

Main Offender ..... Particles

The higher the number, the greater the need for people with respiratory problems to reduce outside activity.

0-50 ..... Good
51-100 ..... Moderate
101-150 ..... Sensitive
151-200 .. Unhealthy

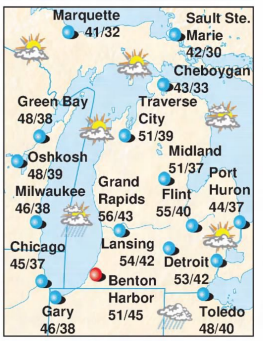
Weather Trivia

Which month averages the most tornadoes per year?

?

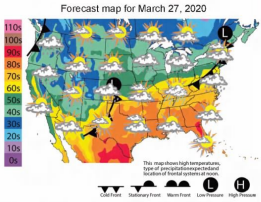
Answer: May, with an average of 143 tornadoes each year.

Regional Map



National Weather Map

Forecast map for March 27, 2020



For latest weather updates: **www.UpdatedWx.com/HP**

Lake Michigan

Today, Variable winds less than 5 kt. A slight chance of showers. Waves 1 to 2 ft. Water temperature 36 degrees. Tonight, E wind 7 to 14 kt. Showers. Waves around 1 ft.

Michigan Forecast

Upper Peninsula

Today, skies will be partly cloudy with highs in the 40s and 50s. East northeast wind 3 to 7 mph. Expect cloudy skies Saturday with widespread showers and rain, highs in the 40s. East wind 6 to 14 mph.

Lower Peninsula

Today, skies will be mostly cloudy to cloudy with scattered showers, highs in the 40s and 50s. Northeast wind 9 mph. Expect cloudy skies Saturday with scattered showers and rain, highs in the 50s. East southeast wind 14 mph.

AID

From page A1

collect their payments immediately, eliminating a one-week waiting period.

What if I only work part-time?

Some states do provide partial unemployment for people who work part time or whose hours have been reduced. And the emergency legislation provides incentives for states to set up so-called "short time compensation" programs, which provide benefits to offset lost pay through reduction of work hours. Those programs are intended to provide companies an alternative to cutting jobs.

For example, the rescue bill would pay half the cost of providing benefits to those with reduced hours through the end of the year to states that launch such programs.

I am a gig worker, can I qualify?

Yes. The bill would create a temporary Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program to cover many workers not traditionally eligible for unemployment benefits, including self-employed people, contractors and those with limited work history. That program will last through December 31.

How much might I get?

The total amount of unemployment insurance depends on what each state provides. Economists at Goldman Sachs calculate that for the average worker who earns about $1,200 a week, the enhanced weekly benefit should fully replace their lost wages. For lower-income employees of restaurants and hospitals, it should provide more than their usual salaries.

J. Scott Applewhite / AP

The Capitol is framed through a window in the Russell Senate Office Building as lawmakers negotiate on the emergency coronavirus response legislation, at the Capitol in Washington, Wednesday.

Has the government done anything for housing payments?

Yes. Government-backed mortgage buyers Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have said that they will suspend all foreclosure sales and evictions of borrowers in single-family homes owned by their companies. They have also expanded their forbearance program, offering more borrowers relief for up to one year and suspending late charges and penalties. Together they guarantee about half of the U.S. home market.

Also, the federal government suspended foreclosures and evictions for mortgages insured by the Federal Housing Administration.

If you're worried about missing a mortgage payment, contact your lender immediately. Numerous banks have said they are willing to work with distressed borrowers, including potentially suspending or reducing mortgage payments for a stretch.

What about renters?

Renters' fates depend on where they live and who they rent from. Reach out to your landlord or property management company to ask for leniency.

Several cities have halted evictions due to the coronavirus. Fannie and Freddie are also offering owners of multifamily properties forbearance relief on their mortgages, on condition they suspend all evictions of renters unable to pay because of the virus.

What about student loans?

Student loan borrowers have a few options.

If you have a federal student loan, you can apply for a deferment or a forbearance at any time. Both of these postpone payments temporarily but interest still accrues on some loans with deferment and all with forbearance.

Now, federal loan borrowers can seek an emergency administrative forbearance, which would allow them to postpone payments for up to 60 days. Borrowers must contact a servicer to apply. The postponement is automatically applied for borrowers more than 31 days late on payments. Interest will not be added to the balance at the end of the forbearance period.

Switching to an income-driven repayment plan may be a good option for some borrowers, said Mark Kantrowitz, a student loan expert and publisher of website Savingforcollege.com. If you've been laid off or your hours were greatly reduced, the payment can be lowered to zero.

MILLAGES

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value at 1.5 mils – would lead to an additional $299 a year.

The two levies that would help fund the fire department – a new 0.5 millage for fire operations and a 0.175-millage renewal for capital improvement – totals 0.675 mils.

The cost of the combined fire millages for an average Lincoln Township home – $199,522 assessed value at 0.675 mils – would be an additional $67.50 per year.

Loar-Porter said the township has focused on seeking proper funding for the police department this year as trustees are considering adding three police officers and a squad car.

The township last added a full-time officer in 2017, bringing its count to 11 officers. Over the last three years, the township's police department averaged more than 5,000 calls annually.

"To keep the police department going with just the 0.5-millage renewal, we would have to dip into the general fund to keep the department going," Loar-Porter said. "We've been dipping into the fund balance for them, but if we keep doing it, they won't have that security blanket."

The fire department has a chief, one full-time firefighter and 15 on-call firefighters who are paid hourly.

Loar-Porter said the fire millages would pay for the department's equipment, supplies, daily operations and firehouse maintenance.

She said the millages would be used to replace 15-year-old air packs and buy additional vehicle extrication tools.

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ARSON

From page A1

She allegedly said she thought her brother was at work and the children were home alone.

But the house was occupied by seven people, including three adults and four children.

Rodriguez is charged with the attempted murder of the four children, two boys ages 4 and 9, and two girls ages 7 and 13. Her brother is their father and she is their aunt, according to court documents.

Lincoln Township firefighters said there were no injuries reported. Damage to the home is estimated at about $7,000.

Lincoln Township police and firefighters were assisted by Berrien County sheriff's deputies and Medic 1 ambulance service.

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EMERGENCY

From page A1

the rising number of cases alone, those confirmed cases represent only a single brush stroke of a much larger surveillance picture that we're looking at in our community," she said.

BCHD staff, along with nurses from Spectrum Health Lakeland, are still working to contact as many people they can identify that may have come into contact with the positive cases, those who have been tested, and those who may have symptoms but haven't been tested.

Britten said they are telling the people they call to stay home.

"It might take another two weeks to see if the contact tracing has had any effect on slowing the spread," she said. "But we do feel very confident in this being a way to slow transmission. We're doing everything we can to slow transmission."

In addition to Berrien County's number rising to 11 cases Thursday, the Van Buren/Cass District Health Department (VBCDHD) announced the first positive case of COVID-19 in Cass County.

The VBCDHD is continuing to investigate the circumstances around this case and working to identify individuals who may have come into close contact with the individual.

The number of cases in Van Buren County remained at two.

State of emergency

In addition Thursday, Berrien County declared a local state of emergency.

The declaration, signed by Berrien County Board Chairman Mac Elliott, puts in place the county's emergency operation plan and better lets the county coordinate disaster relief forces for the county and its municipalities.

It will help with ordering and receiving deliveries of scarce equipment, being able to bring volunteers on board when needed, and begin to build a team focused on economic and community recovery.

Berrien County Undersheriff Chuck Heit said at the news conference that the declaration formalizes what was already happening.

"As we've done in the past, much like the flooding that occurred in 2018, we are looking for all available resources to address the growing community needs in Berrien County," he said.

Britten said the emergency declaration was not made in response to the number of cases in the county, but to open up additional resources for the county.

The Berrien County Emergency Operations Center (EOC), which was activated last week, will continue to operate and support the efforts of the Berrien County Health Department and Spectrum Health Lakeland and add to the response resources already committed to dealing with the pandemic.

"The EOC includes representation of first responders, police, fire and EMS, health services, schools, volunteer organizations, public works, and more," Heit said. "Currently many members of the EOC are working remotely, following the CDC and health department guidelines of social distancing."

Any residents who are feeling sick should stay home and contact their health care provider by phone for guidance. Residents with symptoms of COVID-19, including fever, cough or shortness of breath, are encouraged to call the free Spectrum Health virtual screening phone line that is available to all Michigan residents, at 616-391-2380, to see if testing is necessary.

Britten said about 80 percent of people who contract COVID-19 will feel mild to moderate symptoms that can be managed at home. Older adults may experience a harder time breathing and may need more medical intervention.

She said Berrien County's health system is well prepared for now and has not been overwhelmed.

The VBCDHD will provide updates on its website, www.vbcassdhd.org/covid-19.

The BCHD will provide updates on its website, www.bchd mi.org, on social media, and at its hotline, 1-800-815-5485.

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Don Campbell / HP staff

Berrien County Undersheriff Chuck Heit discusses the declaration of a state of local emergency in Berrien County on Thursday at the Berrien County Conference Room.